

SOUTH AFRICAN

2015

Child Gauge®

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
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Broad overview of the *South African Child Gauge 2015*

The South African Child Gauge is published annually by the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, to monitor progress towards realising children's rights. This issue focuses attention on youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

PART ONE: Children and Law Reform

Part one outlines recent legislative developments affecting children and youth. This issue comments on litigation, law reform and policy developments including amendments to the Sexual Offences Act; a High Court judgment on *ukuthwala*; two policies to promote the sexual reproductive health rights of adolescents; proposed amendments to the Children's Act; amendments to the Maintenance Act; and the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020. See pages 10 – 17.

PART TWO: Youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty

Part two presents nine essays – the first essay outlines how young people in South Africa experience multiple dimensions of deprivation and the need to intervene in this crucial youth stage to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The following three essays outline some of the structural barriers to upward social mobility. They emphasise the need to address inequities in the schooling system and to improve young people's access to post-school education and employment. A further two essays highlight the central role of health and parenting in supporting the well-being of youth today and their future productivity, while essay seven explores patterns of youth mobility and migration and their impact on the lives and life chances of young people. The final two essays foreground young people's agency and the importance of facilitating a sense of belonging, active citizenship and young people's capacity to navigate adversity. See pages 18 – 97.

PART THREE: Children Count – The numbers

Part three updates a set of key indicators on children's socio-economic rights and provides commentary on the extent to which these rights have been realised. In some instances, youth-specific data are also presented. The indicators are a special subset selected from the website www.childrencount.ci.org.za. See pages 98 – 133.

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
ANA	Annual National Assessment	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ANC	African National Congress	NIDS	National Income Dynamics Study
ASSA	Actuarial Society of South Africa	NMR	Neonatal Mortality Rate
CBPWP	Community-Based Public Works Programme	NQF	National Qualifications Framework
CHE	Council on Higher Education	NSES	National School Effectiveness Study
CI	Children's Institute	NSFAS	National School Financial Assistance Scheme
CDG	Care Dependency Grant	NTC	National Technical Certificate
CSG	Child Support Grant	NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
DBE	Department of Basic Education	NYS	National Youth Service
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training	PIRLS	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study
DoH	Department of Health	QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
ECD	Early Childhood Development	RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme	RICA	Regulation of Interception of Communication Act
ETI	Employment Tax Incentive	RMS	Rapid Mortality Surveillance System
FCG	Foster Child Grant	SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
FET	Further Education and Training	SALDRU	Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit
GHS	General Household Survey	SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome	SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
IMF	International Monetary Fund	SAYC	South African Youth Council
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate	SETA	Skills Education and Training Authorities
IYDS	Integrated Youth Development Strategy	SOCPEN	Social Pensions
JOBS	Jobs and Opportunities Seekers	SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching	Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
MDG	Millennium Development Goal	STIs	Sexually-Transmitted Infections
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index	TB	Tuberculosis
NAFCI	National Adolescent Friendly Clinic Initiative	TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study
NARYSEC	National Rural Youth Service	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma	U5MR	Under-5 Mortality Rate
NCCPF	National Child Care and Protection Forum	UCT	University of Cape Town
NCPR	National Child Protection Register	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
NCV	National Certificate Vocational	WHO	World Health Organization
NDP	National Development Plan	YRBS	Youth Risk Behaviour Survey
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit		

Foreword

Jonathan D Jansen

Rector and Vice-Chancellor, University of the Free State

There is hardly a school in rural South Africa where you will not find older women preparing large pots of food from early morning onwards in preparation for the lunch break. For many children in this country, this gift of food could be their only main meal of the day. Now leap over grade school and you find university students in the same country, such as those on the *No Student Hungry* programme of the University of the Free State, dependent on a food bursary in order to survive; in fact at this institution, 59% of students have been found to be food insecure.

There's something that is particularly devastating about poverty – if you were born poor and struggle to secure food, there is a good chance you will become a young child, adolescent and young adult still poor and uncertain of where you will find your next meal. Like *bitter knowledge*, the subject of my book on the intergenerational transfer of knowledge among young people, poverty travels from one generation to the next and across children of the same parents.

We know from research that when children do not eat regularly and well, the social, physical and educational consequences are severe and cycles of deprivation repeat themselves. Unless, of course, something intervenes to disrupt the reproductive nature of poverty.

I have enormous respect for the many non-governmental organisations, religious bodies, foundations, welfare societies and committed citizens who provide access to food, clothing, sanitary towels for girls, shelter, medication and, of course government, subsidies for the poor. But we must have a long-term strategy



for lifting and keeping whole communities out of poverty and it should come as no surprise if I make the very obvious point that an accessible, high-quality education changes not only individual fortunes but also domestic economies as well as the course of nations.

This year I again asked students at the 2015 graduation ceremonies: "How many of you are the first in your families to go to obtain a university degree?" Two things grabbed our attention. One, that about 80% of the new graduates put up their hands and, two, that not all the raised hands were Black. Suddenly, a poor child in the family has a role model to look up to; a family can look forward to a decent though shared paycheck; and a neighbourhood has a graduate it can consult for legal advice or medical assistance or

psychological counselling or going to university.

But none of this is possible without solid research and illuminating stories that bring to public attention the status of children in South Africa society, the consequences of neglect of the young, and powerful cases of what can happen when innovative approaches to intractable problems affecting youth are taken to scale. The annual *South African Child Gauge* is without question the pre-eminent national publication on the subject of children, and society owes a debt of gratitude to the Children's Institute for this evidence-led investment in the future.

I urge government, civil society actors, the donor community as well as the media to act on the critical information in the *South African Child Gauge 2015* especially with regards to the interventions described and outcomes anticipated that could still change the fate of millions of poor children and their families.

Reflections on youth

Buti Manamela

Deputy Minister in the Presidency: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation as well as Youth Development and Administration

In 2016 South Africa will commemorate the 40th anniversary of June 16. As a nation, we will reflect on this historic day. We will compare our past to our present. That is inevitable. In doing this we must remember that context matters.

The message was clear on June 16, 1976: “Young people do not matter. They are a threat.” There was no youth policy and even if there were a youth policy, Black youth would certainly not have featured in it. South Africa is a very different place today. We see young people as resources and our National Youth Policy (NYP) 2020 characterises youth as assets whose power must be harnessed for the betterment of society.

The NYP 2020 recognises that young people need a hand-up and not a handout. The policy is inclusive of all youth while giving priority to the most vulnerable.

The brave, heroic activism of the youth of 1976 and the young lions of the 1980s paved the way for a youth voice. The voice of the youth has broken through. Today, young people are consulted on key government policies and initiatives. Their voices matter and their views must be heard.

Unacceptably high youth unemployment rates persist today. In addressing the high levels of youth unemployment, we need innovative youth entrepreneurs and youth co-operatives. We need fresh ideas that must propel young people to find a niche in the economy and transform it. The levels of entrepreneurship uptake among South Africa’s youth are still far too low compared to our BRICS’ counterparts and other middle-income developing countries.

As a result of early drop-out, low school completion rates and poor quality schooling, too many young people are not transitioning into the labour market and thereby falling into the poverty trap. We must make education fashionable. We have to improve the access to education. And at the same time we have to improve the quality of education. What should young people be studying? Are young people studying towards the qualifications that are needed



by labour market? Are we persuading young people to study towards the needs and opportunities of a changing economy?

Social commentators have described today’s youth as depoliticised and apathetic. They are characterised as a selfish generation that demands everything on a silver platter without ever having to work for it. But how do we explain the Rhodes Must Fall Campaign and other progressive initiatives across the country?

Their youthful energy in challenging the powers that be over racist symbols is inspiring. It opens up opportunities for a constructive racial discourse. It opens up opportunities to redefine the future. Their brave actions have dispelled the notion that South Africa’s youth are depoliticised and

apathetic. Young people should take advantage of this momentum. Let’s take the transformation discourse beyond symbols. Let’s lead this discourse towards the transformation of the economy and beyond.

In our NYP 2020 consultations across the country, young people told us in no uncertain terms that they do not want a handout. They do not want to be seen as a charity case. They want access to opportunities and they will make a success of it. They want a hand-up. They want to be partners in their own development.

The NYP 2020 and the soon to be released Integrated Youth Development Strategy is anchored around giving young people opportunity with a hand-up. Our youth development policy is centred on building youth agency with young people at the centre of their own development.

I welcome the *South African Child Gauge 2015*. The research presented will help us to better understand the situation of youth in present day South Africa so that our policies and programmes can be relevant to their needs and aspirations. I urge policy-makers and youth development practitioners to read this publication for a better grasp on our work with young people across South Africa.





PART ONE:

Children and Law Reform

Part one examines recent policy and legislative developments that affect children and youth in South Africa. These include:

- Amendments to the Sexual Offences Act;
- A High Court judgment on *ukuthwala*;
- Policies to promote the sexual reproductive health rights of adolescents;
- Proposed amendments to the Children's Act;
- Amendments to the Maintenance Act;
- The National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020.

Legislative and policy developments 2014/2015

Lucy Jamieson (Children's Institute, University of Cape Town),
Carina du Toit (Centre for Child Law, University of Pretoria) and Janet Jobson (DG Murray Trust)

This review comments on the key legislative developments affecting children between August 2014 and July 2015. These include:

- Amendments to the Sexual Offences Act that decriminalise sexual acts between consenting teenagers and stop the automatic inclusion of child offenders on the National Register for Sex Offenders.
- High Court judgment that *ukuthwala* cannot be used as a defence against criminal charges of trafficking and rape.
- Policies to promote the sexual and reproductive health rights of adolescents and reduce the stress on learning caused by direct and indirect effects of HIV, sexually transmitted infections and tuberculosis.
- Two new Bills that propose to amend the Children's Act to:
 - ensure that all orphans will be eligible for foster care;
 - allow government social workers to handle adoptions; and
 - stop the automatic inclusion of child offenders on the National Child Protection Register.
- Changes to the Maintenance Act to improve the enforcement of maintenance orders and provide for the blacklisting of maintenance defaulters.
- The National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020, which seeks to address the specific needs of young people over the medium term.

Amendments to the Sexual Offences Act

The Constitutional Court has ordered Parliament to amend the Sexual Offences Act¹ after finding that some sections were unconstitutional² (for a full discussion of the case see the *South African Child Gauge 2014: Part One*)³. The Sexual Offences Act Amendment Bill⁴ was tabled by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services in November 2014. Parliament passed the Bill in June and the Sexual Offences Amendment Act⁵ came into effect on 3 July 2015.

The first significant amendment is that the definition of "child" has been brought in line with the Constitution and the Children's Act, and is now defined as a person below the age of 18. The previous definition created two different categories of children. For purposes of sections 15 and 16 in the Sexual Offences Act, a child was a person older than 12 but younger than 16. In respect of the rest of the Act, a child included all persons below the age of 18. This created considerable confusion in the application of

sections 15 and 16, which refer to consensual sexual acts between adolescents.¹ This amendment is an improvement as it removes the confusion that the previous categories created.

The text of sections 15 and 16 now specifically refers to "a child who is 12 years or older but under the age of 16 years", rather than relying on the definition of "child". Following the amendments, no child who is older than 12 and younger than 16 may be charged with committing an act of consensual sexual penetration or violation with another child in the same age group. In addition, consensual sex between a 16- or 17-year-old and a child below the age of 16 is not considered a crime provided that the children are less than two years apart in age. Even if the age gap is more than two years, only the Director of Public Prosecution can authorise prosecution of a 16- or 17-year-old child.

It should be noted that the age of consent to sexual acts remains 16 in respect of sexual acts between children and adults aged 18 or older. Any sexual conduct between an adult and a child below the age of 16 is a criminal offence and must be reported to the police. Non-consensual sex is always a crime and that, too, must be reported.

In the case of *J v National Director of Public Prosecutions*,⁶ the Constitutional Court declared section 50 of the Sexual Offences Act unconstitutional because it failed to distinguish between adult and child offenders or consider the child's best interests. Parliament amended the section to make it clear that a child who is convicted of a sexual offence against a child is not automatically included on the National Register for Sex Offenders. A child sex offender may only be included on the register:⁷

- On application from the prosecutor for an order that the child should be included on the register;
- After the court has considered a report by a probation officer and any other evidence dealing specifically with the risk that the child offender may commit another sexual offence against a child;
- After the child offender has been given an opportunity to make representation as to why his or her name should not be included on the register; and
- If the court is satisfied that substantial and compelling circumstances exist that justify the child offender's name being included on the register.

In addition, section 51(2A) creates a mechanism that will allow

ⁱ Section 15 relates to acts of consensual sexual penetration with certain children (statutory rape). Section 16 relates to acts of consensual sexual violation with certain children (statutory sexual assault); this includes kissing and caressing.

child offenders whose names were included on the register before the amendments came into effect to remove their names from the register.ⁱⁱ A child whose name was included may apply to court for an order to remove his or her name from the register. The application must convince the court that it is unlikely that the child will commit another sexual offence against a child or mentally disabled person and that there are no pending charges against the child offender relating to a sexual offence against a child or mentally disabled person. A similar application may be made by a child whose name was placed on the register after the amendments came into effect and who wants to have his or her name removed before the prescribed time period has lapsed.ⁱⁱⁱ

Forced marriage and *ukuthwala*

The matter of *Jezile v the State*⁸ dealt with the forced marriage and rape of a 14-year-old girl in the context of forced marriage, or *ukuthwala*. Her uncles and grandmother arranged her marriage to the 28-year-old Jezile in exchange for R8,000 *lobola* (bride money). Jezile took her to Cape Town where he repeatedly raped and assaulted her. She escaped and made her way to the police. Jezile was charged with and convicted for trafficking, rape and assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

On appeal to the Western Cape High Court, Jezile claimed that his actions fell within the cultural practice of *ukuthwala*, and this was a defence against the charges against him. The court was called on to determine what the practice of *ukuthwala* entailed and whether it could be a valid defence to a charge of trafficking, rape and assault. The court found that a central requirement of the cultural practice of *ukuthwala* is consent from both parties to the marriage. Without consent from the girl, this case could never amount to real *ukuthwala*. The court concluded that the “aberrant” form of *ukuthwala* that involves forced marriage, rape and assault in order to subdue the girl bride is not a valid defence to criminal charges. The case emphasised the importance of the obligations on society to protect girl children. In this case, the girl was still in her school uniform when she was forced to relinquish all her children’s rights and become an adult.

Policies to promote sexual and reproductive health rights

The government released two policy documents over the last year that promote healthy sexual behaviour and support the fulfilment of adolescents’ rights to sexual and reproductive health services. The Department of Social Development (DSD) published the final *National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Framework Strategy 2014 – 2019*.⁹ The Department of Basic Education (DBE) released the *Draft National Policy on HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Tuberculosis*¹⁰ for public comment in May 2015. Both aim to reduce teenage pregnancy; increase levels of educational attainment; and decrease HIV levels amongst young people.

National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Framework Strategy 2014 – 2019

The strategy purports to take a rights-based approach and is indeed inclusive as it specifically targets the needs of marginalised groups such as adolescents with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer and intersex adolescents. It describes itself as an “action guide” but provides little more beyond the list of other related laws, policies, strategies and key definitions, with no actual guidance on which stakeholders should do what to achieve the intended outcomes.

The strategy highlights the high incidence of unplanned and unwanted teenage pregnancies as a major concern and obstacle to sustainable development that needs “urgent and collaborative attention from all spheres of government, civil society and development partners”.¹¹ In 2011, the proportion of women who give birth by age 20 was 30%;¹² thus teenage pregnancy is a pressing issue. Whilst the strategy focuses on measures to reduce the birth rate, the government also has an obligation to develop policies that will allow adolescent mothers to continue their education.¹³ Sadly, the strategy pays little attention to supporting teenagers who become pregnant – a missed opportunity as current policy is contradictory and confusing.¹⁴ And although the strategy recognises the need for a coordinated approach and input from a range of stakeholders, it identifies the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) as the lead agency. It is doubtful that the NYDA has the capacity to coordinate input from the DSD, DBE, Department of Health and the range of civil society organisations that will be required to implement the services.

Draft National Policy on HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Tuberculosis (TB)

This draft policy of the DBE recognises that the combined direct and indirect effects of HIV and TB make children vulnerable and place additional stress on learning and teaching in the classroom. The policy aims to reduce the incidence of HIV and TB amongst learners and staff by firstly improving access to HIV and TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care and support services; and, secondly, by increasing knowledge, cognitive skills and information about life skills, and HIV and TB in particular.

It includes a range of measures to ensure access to age-appropriate information about sexuality, relationships and responsibilities as part of the curriculum. This is to be welcomed as young people need more education on how to prevent the transmission of HIV and STIs.¹⁵ The true skill is in managing relationships and developing healthy sexual behaviours, and holistic programmes like PREPARE and Stepping Stones have been shown to reduce intimate partner violence and postpone sexual debut.¹⁶

The policy also promotes access to contraception, and states that “access to male and female condoms [barrier protection] and information on their use will be made available to all learners”.¹⁷

ii The final order of the Constitutional Court in *J v National Director of Public Prosecutions* did not suspend section 50 and the placement of child sex offenders on the register. This meant that during the period between the judgment of the court and the enactment of amendments, child sex offenders’ details were still entered on the register. The legislation therefore needed to create a mechanism that would allow child sex offenders to have their names removed from the register.

iii Section 51(1) prescribes when any person whose name is on the register may apply to have his or her name removed subject to the person’s sentence and number of convictions.

However, it is unclear what is meant by “access”. The first question that needs clarification centres on the age of the learners who will be offered contraception – the Children’s Act states that any child over the age of 12 should have access, whilst the Integrated School Health Policy (ISHP) illegally restricts access to those over 14 without the consent of the parent or caregiver.¹⁸ Given that almost 11% of learners report that they had sex before they were 15¹⁹, access to contraception should be from the lower age of 12.

The second challenge is that learners are often reluctant to get condoms issued by an authority figure.²⁰ If learners have to approach a nurse to get condoms from mobile clinics, as provided for in the ISHP, it is possible that many will be put off. Learners need easy and discreet access to condoms. Condom dispensers could be placed in male and female bathrooms. Children also need access to counselling and support but access to condoms should not be dependent on them first obtaining counselling.

Another area of concern is the question of who gets “access” to voluntary counselling, screening and testing. The DBE policy states that counselling services will be offered through mobile units to all senior and further education and training-phased learners as well as intermediate learners,^{iv} where required.²¹ It is important that the policy is brought in line with the Children’s Act which states that all children above the age of 12 can consent to HIV testing, and those below 12 who have the capacity to understand the risks, benefits and social and other implications of the test.²²

Coordination of sexual reproductive health services

Improving adolescents’ experience of sexual reproductive health services will require close cooperation between government departments and, whilst the partnership developed between the Departments of Home Affairs and Basic Education seems to be strengthening, the fact that DBE and DSD published two separate policies covering many of the same issues suggests that they are not working together closely. This does not bode well for integrated delivery.

The Children’s Act

The Department of Social Development published two draft Bills for public comment in November 2013.²³ The draft Bills were then considered by Cabinet and some changes were made. The Minister of Social Development tabled the Children’s Amendment Bill²⁴ and the Children’s Second Amendment Bill²⁵ in Parliament in April 2015. Both propose to amend the Children’s Act.²⁶

The reason for two Bills relates to the Constitution’s prescribed processes for passing legislation. When the national Parliament deals with a Bill that will be implemented by national government departments, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces are the only bodies that deal with the Bill. However, when a Bill deals with matters that the provinces must implement, the provincial legislatures have a right to participate in the process of developing the legislation alongside the national bodies. The Children’s Act contains competencies that must be implemented

by both national and provincial departments; therefore the Amendment Bill – just like the original Act – was split into two parts. Although they will be processed separately, the two Amendment Bills should be read together. For the sake of simplicity, we refer here to the “Amendment Bill”.

Some provisions remain unchanged from the initial drafts published for public comment, including the judicial review of emergency removal of children from their parents; the definition of persons deemed unsuitable to work with children, and changes to the alternative care chapter. For more information about these provisions see the *South African Child Gauge 2014*.²⁷ This section will focus on the sections that are new or revised in the tabled version of the Bill.

National Child Protection Register

The Amendment Bill proposes that child offenders’ names should be included in the National Child Protection Register (NCPR). However, it gives the court discretion not to add a child offender’s name to the register “on good cause shown”.²⁸ After allowing a child offender to make representations, the court may decide that it is not in the child offender’s best interests to add his or her name to the NCPR. This amendment is intended to harmonise the Children’s Act with Constitutional Court’s judgment in the *J* case²⁹ and amendments to the Sexual Offences Act.

The amendments to the Children’s Act mirror what was in the original Sexual Offences Act Amendment Bill³⁰. However, that Bill was changed by Parliament and the final Sexual Offences Amendment Act³¹ contains better protection for children. In the Sexual Offences Amendment Act³² the default position is that children’s names should not be added to the register and the onus is on the prosecutor to ask the court to include a child offender’s name on the register and to prove that the child poses a risk following an assessment by a professional. Therefore the Children’s Amendment Bill should be aligned with the Sexual Offences Amendment Act.³³

The amendments also strengthen the provisions aimed at populating the NCPR with the names of anyone convicted of any of the offences listed in section 120(4)(a) in the five years prior to the commencement of the Children’s Act. The Act commenced in 2010, so this would include convictions dating back to 2005. There is no exception made for offenders who were children at the time of the offence, and the police’s criminal records do not list the age of the victim. Therefore, it may not be possible to identify child offenders from electronic records. The Bill also includes a new procedure that will enable child offenders to apply to have their names removed from the NCPR; however, they should not be there in the first place.

Change to the definition of child in need of care and protection in relation to abandoned and orphaned children (foster care)

The Children’s Act states that not all orphans are in need of state care and protection, only those “without visible means of support”³⁴.

^{iv} The intermediate phase is grades 4 – 6; the senior phase is grades 7 – 9; and the further education and training phase grades 10 – 12.

This phrase was interpreted by some magistrates to mean children “without care” and by others to mean “without financial means”. As a result, children in the same circumstances were treated differently. The South Gauteng High Court was asked to interpret the meaning of the phrase. In two separate judgments,³⁵ the court ruled that it essentially amounts to a means test for the Foster Child Grant (FCG) to be applied by magistrates. In response to these judgments, the Amendment Bill proposes to change the wording to:

- (a) has been abandoned or orphaned and does not ostensibly have the ability to support himself or herself;

In the High Court cases, the interpretations of section 150(1) (a) were arguably necessary to protect the best interests of the three children before the court to enable them to access the FCG, which has a much higher monetary value than the Child Support Grant (CSG). However, the interpretation is not systemically implementable and thus not in the best interests of children as a group.

The number of orphans living in poverty with relatives far exceeds the capacity of social workers and courts to process them through the foster care system. According to the DSD’s own calculations, there is currently a shortfall of 3,725 social workers to manage the existing foster child placements.³⁶ It has taken over 10 years to reach around 500,000 orphans and over the past two years the number reached has been decreasing, not increasing, whilst it is estimated that a further one million orphans living with relatives would qualify if the amendment is passed.³⁷ The foster care system will not reach the majority of orphans and all efforts to try are diverting much-needed resources away from the care and protection of abused and neglected children.

A further concern is that the amendment is likely to confuse matters further as the wording is unclear and vague. Imposing a means test on the child as a test for entering foster care would exclude orphans who have a small inheritance/pension. This would be in conflict with a 2015 Constitutional Court judgment that the Road Accident Fund may not deduct FCGs or CSGs from payments arising through the death of a parent in a road accident.³⁸ Furthermore, if a means test was imposed on the FCG, it should be contained in the Social Assistance Act³⁹ and its regulations and administered by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) according to a prescribed formula. Having a means test at the placement stage without specifying a formula will result in each magistrate creating their own means test and result in inequities in access to the FCG across the country. Furthermore, having a means test at the placement stage confuses the need for “care” with the need for “financial support”. A child with an inheritance may not need financial support, but they may very well still need an adult to “care” for them.

In the aftermath of the first High Court case, the DSD announced that it planned to amend the Social Assistance Act to create a kinship care grant for relatives caring for orphans.⁴⁰

On 20 November 2013, a draft Children’s Third Amendment Bill was presented at the National Child Care and Protection Forum (NCCPF) in Johannesburg, accompanied by an amendment⁴¹ to the regulations of the Social Assistance Act. This Third Amendment Bill addresses the systematic challenges in the foster care system. It proposes to divert orphaned children who are living safely with their family members away from the child protection system to SASSA to apply for an “Extended Child Support Grant”. This grant would be meant specifically for orphaned children living with family members and would be a higher amount than the existing CSG. This proposal would be cheaper and relieve pressure on the child protection system. The Third Amendment Bill is still in the very early stages of development and it could be several years before it reaches Parliament.

Adoptions

A series of amendments aim to:

- stop adoption orders lapsing after two years;
- extend the definition of adoptable children to include stepchildren, and children whose parents consent to an adoption; and
- allow the spouse or life partner of a biological parent to adopt their partner’s children, without the biological parent losing his or her parental responsibilities and rights⁴².

The amendments also include a change to the definition of an “adoption social worker” to allow government social workers to provide adoption services. At the NCCPF in February 2015, government officials argued that this reform is necessary to expand the pool of professionals that can render adoption services and to increase demand for adoptions by reducing costs.⁴³ They argued that government services are provided for free, whereas private agencies charge fees (although, designated child protection organisations typically do not charge fees for adoptions).

One concern is that government should not be permitted to both accredit and provide the service, i.e. to be both a player and a referee. A further concern is that the definition would appear to allow any government social worker to provide adoption services. Yet social workers in private practice must have registered this speciality with the South African Council for Social Service Professionals before they can apply for accreditation to offer adoption services. There is no explicit requirement in the Amendment Bill for government social workers to have the specialisation. The Social Service Professions Act recognises adoption as a social work speciality and following widespread consultation on the Policy on Social Service Practitioners⁴⁴ there are no proposals to change this. Therefore, the two laws seem to be contradictory.

If passed, this definition could mean that children and parents, both biological and adoptive, served by government social workers will receive a less specialised and arguably less expert service. This is contrary to the equality principle enshrined in the Constitution and the Children’s Act.

Maintenance Amendment Bill

The Maintenance Amendment Act⁴⁵ was adopted by Parliament^v and signed by the President on 9 September 2015. It will come into operation on a date fixed by the President by proclamation in the *Government Gazette*. The Bill introduces several amendments to aid the practical operation of the maintenance courts including:

- granting the maintenance officer the power to subpoena any person to give evidence in connection with the enquiry;
- placing a duty on the maintenance court to conclude enquiries speedily; and
- establishing a uniform manner for the transfer of files from one maintenance court to another.

The most important substantive amendments relate to the Act's enforcement provisions. Firstly, the maintenance defaulter may potentially be "blacklisted". When a complaint is made at the maintenance court that a person is failing to pay maintenance in terms of a maintenance order, then the maintenance officer must forward the details of the defaulter's name to the Credit Bureau. The aim is to prevent maintenance defaulters from obtaining any further loans or credit while they still owe maintenance.^{vi}

Secondly, the court will now decide whether or not to convert criminal proceedings, where a person is prosecuted for failure to pay court-ordered maintenance, into a maintenance inquiry. Prior to the amendment the court had to convert the proceedings when the public prosecutor requested a conversion. In terms of the amendment, the court may of its own accord or at the request of the prosecutor convert the criminal proceedings into a maintenance inquiry if there is "good cause".⁴⁶ This allows court oversight to ensure that criminal proceedings continue when it is appropriate.

National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020

The National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020⁴⁷ (NYP 2020) was published for comment in February 2015, and passed by Cabinet in May. The policy frames government's approach to meeting the specific needs of young people over the medium term. Very positively, the analysis underpinning the policy recognises the need to address both structural economic issues, the enduring effect of apartheid legacies, and some social dynamics, particularly around race and gender.

Importantly, the new policy acknowledges that the absence of a strong youth machinery is a critical blockage to responding effectively to the needs of young people in South Africa. The National Youth Commission and the Umsobomvu Youth Fund, which were the original mechanisms expected to deliver youth development, and the NYDA which replaced them in 2009, have struggled to implement programmes effectively, lobby effectively for policies that could unlock real change for young people, and position the needs of young people in the public and political space.

The new institutions proposed by the policy include a youth presidential working group comprising all deputy-ministers

which will focus on mainstreaming youth across all government departments. The policy implementation relies heavily on "youth desks" at various levels of government – these are meant to promote youth interests in all departments, and to implement youth interventions. There is little evidence that any of the previous youth desks have had positive effects in representing young people's interests, promoting youth participation in decision-making, or implementing interventions to support young people. The only proposed mechanism for reporting on youth to Parliament is through the NYDA's episodic reports to the Portfolio Committee for Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation. This limits Parliament's oversight to the work of this single agency, rather than overall government responses to the specific needs of young people.

Fortunately, the policy does recognise the limited capacity, and far too broad mandate, of the NYDA and notes that it will seek to explore a more feasible role for the agency. The new policy's engagement with non-governmental organisations relies on, and seeks to strengthen, the South African Youth Council (SAYC). The SAYC has a very poor reach and is generally unresponsive and perceived to be politically aligned. The singular reliance on the SAYC as a "voice for the youth" in the policy is extremely worrying.

The situational analysis in the new policy also identifies the following challenges affecting young people:

- unemployment and joblessness;
- high drop-out rates and inadequate skills development;
- poor health, high HIV/AIDS prevalence, and high rates of violence and substance abuse;
- lack of access to sporting and cultural opportunities;
- lack of social cohesion and volunteerism;
- inadequate framework for youth work; and
- disability.

It is very positive that the policy does recognise these critical issues, seeks to create a framework through which to tackle them, and sets some targets for achievement within the next five years. The policy includes a range of proposals to stimulate economic participation; boost skills; improve the health of young people; fight substance abuse; foster social cohesion; and build effective and responsive youth development institutions. The specific recommendations range in their strength and quality. Many of the recommendations simply call for improvements in the quality of existing services and the inclusion of young people at a larger scale in anti-poverty initiatives.

The policy does not spell out how each recommendation will be implemented – that is the work of the Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS), which should be formulated and released shortly. However, in some ways the policy reads as a wish-list rather than a strong, well-articulated approach with clear mechanisms for successful implementation. The setting of very ambitious targets in some areas (Eg, "in the next five years learner retention rates should be increased to 90%"⁴⁸) may spur on immediate and dramatic shifts in practice. Without strong and

v The Bill was passed by the National Assembly on 23 June 2015 and the National Council of Provinces on 25 June 2015.

vi Clause 11 of the Amendment Act inserts a new section 26(2A) in the principal Act.

evidence-based strategies to reach these targets, however, the policy will be rendered toothless.

Until there are clear lines of accountability, and strong leadership driving it forward, the policy itself is unlikely to achieve big shifts across various sectors. There is, therefore, a strong and important role for young people themselves and for youth-orientated organisations to mobilise around this process of rolling out the policy over the next five years. And they should use the policy itself to do it – as it notes “young people must lead in driving the realisation of the constitutional dream.”⁴⁹

Conclusion

All of the changes to law and policy described above identify pressing challenges facing children and young people; however, the legislative framework is still silent on some of the most contentious issues. For example, the government has, in the face of opposition from certain sections of the public, recognised that teenagers are having sex and proposed sensible measures to enable them to do so safely. The Sexual Offences Amendment Act decriminalises sexual acts between consenting adolescents, whilst the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Strategy⁵⁰ and the Draft Policy on HIV, STIs and TB⁵¹ aim to reduce teenage pregnancy, increase levels of educational attainment and decrease HIV and STIs levels amongst young people. However, that neither policy pays adequate attention to supporting teenagers who become pregnant leaves a serious gap in government policy.

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For the most part all of these legislative developments are to be welcomed in that they set goals that further children's rights. Restricting people's access to credit if they have defaulted on their maintenance payments puts children's best interests first, and ending the automatic inclusion of child offenders on the NSRO and NCPR acknowledges that children can be rehabilitated.

In other cases the picture is more complex: The proposed change to the definition of a child in need of care and protection in the Children's Amendment Bill intends to increase the number of orphans that are placed in foster care. Whilst this seems like a laudable goal, government does not have the resources to implement the proposed change; thus children who have been abused and neglected will wait longer to receive child protection services.

Implementation challenges go beyond a simple lack of resources as many of the instruments will require intersectoral collaboration to be effective. The National Youth Policy recognises and seeks to address the specific challenges faced by young people in South Africa. Whilst the objectives of the policy are closely aligned to the aspirations of the current generation, the coordination relies on institutions that the policy itself acknowledges are weak. Unless the line departments that will deliver these services incorporate these goals into their own strategic plans, the commitments in the NYP2020 will remain a wish-list rather than a strong well-articulated approach with clear mechanisms for successful implementation.



STEPPING STONES

"You must constantly be thinking of new things"

The Little Circle

FOCUS

Instead of a New Year's resolution, I'm going to make better choices

PROUD

I love sitting on the beach chatting to my mom, watching the seagulls as the sun goes down

taste it. Crave it

BEST
will come if

sweat tears

GOOD, BETTER





PART TWO:

Youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty

Part two presents a series of nine essays that explore key challenges facing youth in South Africa and that recommend targeted interventions during the critical transition from adolescence to young adulthood. The essays outline:

- the multiple dimensions of poverty and their impact on youth development;
- inequalities in the schooling of children that perpetuate an intergenerational cycle of poverty;
- the challenges young people face in accessing and completing post-school education;
- the challenges of young people to access employment;
- the central role of parents, and the need to support families within their broader socio-economic context;
- the need to promote the health and well-being of adolescents and youth;
- the patterns and potential drivers and impact of youth mobility and migration;
- opportunities to promote social cohesion and a sense of belonging; and
- the importance of developing young people's capacity to navigate adversity.

Overview

Part 2 provides an overview of the “state of youth” in South Africa, informed by a life course understanding of development. The collection of short essays highlights the need for a range of targeted interventions during this critical transition stage of youth into young adulthood. It motivates for a stronger evidence base, provides recommendations for changes in key areas to increase the life chances of young people *and* of the next generation of children, and identifies a series of capacities that may contribute towards breaking the cycle of persistent poverty.

A focus on youth: An opportunity to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty

(pages 22 – 33)

More than half of all young people in South Africa live in poverty and are faced with low levels of education, high levels of unemployment and a very restricted access to the social grant system. This essay reviews evidence on the intergenerational transmission of poverty in South Africa, and explores its impact on the youth population. It stresses the need for an integrated approach to youth development and increased coordination between government departments to ensure effective programming and implementation of the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020.

Schooling in South Africa:

How low-quality education becomes a poverty trap

(pages 34 – 41)

The strong legacy of apartheid and the consequent correlation between education and wealth helps drive an intergenerational cycle of poverty where children inherit the social standing of their parents or caregivers, irrespective of their own abilities or effort. This essay provides an overview of educational outcomes in South Africa, and describes the linkages between the education system and the labour market. It illustrates clearly how low-quality education in South Africa is a key mechanism in the reproduction of inequality and proposes policy and programmatic interventions to alleviate the situation.

Post-school education:

Broadening alternative pathways from school to work

(pages 42 – 50)

Post-school education has a critical role to play in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty by increasing young people's employability and earning potential. This essay outlines the structure of the post-school education sector, and explores the obstacles youth face in accessing and completing post-school education. While government is on track in terms of policy in many spheres, implementation needs to be improved. The essay concludes with key recommendations to improve post-school outcomes.

Youth unemployment in South Africa:

Understanding the challenge and working on solutions

(pages 51 – 59)

Young people face multiple obstacles on their path from education to the labour market, in the context of high levels of unemployment. While challenges in schooling and post-secondary education are contributing factors, the structure of the labour market and personal, household and community factors also impact on young people's ability to access employment. This essay describes the extent of youth unemployment and explores the impact of the structure of the labour market and other key factors on access to work. It stresses the importance of acknowledging youth agency and survival strategies in developing and implementing effective interventions to address youth unemployment in South Africa.

Youth health and well-being: Why it matters

(pages 60 – 68)

Improving the health and well-being of adolescents and youth is crucial for their well-being today, and for their future economic productivity. Behaviours and health developed during these stages of life are key predictors of the *adult* burden of disease and health – like education – is a key factor in the intergenerational transmission of poverty. This essay provides an overview of the current state of youth health and well-being and identifies opportunities to improve these.

**Parenting, poverty and young people in South Africa:
What are the connections?**

(pages 69 – 74)

Parenting affects child development from conception to adulthood. But poverty can make parenting a very difficult task, and parenting that becomes harsh and inconsistent can increase the risk that young people continue to live in poverty – because such parenting is more likely to lead to poor health and risk behaviours in children that will negatively affect their ability to perform well at school and find employment. This essay examines how poverty affects parenting, with particular emphasis on teen parenting, and explores what can be done to support parents in South Africa.

Youth and mobility: Is movement linked to opportunity?

(pages 75 – 82)

Migration and mobility are under-researched topics in South Africa, with very little known about youth mobility in particular. Migration is not only about individual choice; it is related to broader livelihood strategies of households and family networks. This essay reviews current evidence and provides some preliminary analysis about the patterns and main drivers of mobility and migration and their impact on the lives and life chances of young people.

**Youth identity, belonging and citizenship:
Strengthening our democratic future**

(pages 83 – 91)

Young people in South Africa today have to contend with an uncertain future characterised by persistent poverty, inequality and violence. Within this context, this essay explores youth identity and agency, in particular the need to facilitate a sense of belonging and active citizenship. It highlights the need to take youth agency seriously, and to provide support and bridging relationships as well as maximising dedicated youth programmes and media platforms to allow youth access to opportunities that enable a sense of real and imminent possibility in life, and to build a positive collective identity.

Developing young people's capacities to navigate adversity

(pages 92 – 97)

This essay draws together some of the key arguments explored in the preceding essays about the “state of youth” in South Africa and reflects on what is needed – and can be done – to promote youth development, and to disrupt the negative personal and societal effects of the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

A focus on youth: An opportunity to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty

Ariane De Lannoy, Murray Leibbrandt and Emily Frame
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“No political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life... attacking poverty and deprivation must therefore be the first priority of a democratic government.”

National Development Plan 2030¹

Twenty-one years into the new, democratic South Africa, poverty levels remain high, especially in population groups that were discriminated against during apartheid. To alleviate the worst levels of poverty, the government provides a “social wage package” that includes social grants, no-fee schools, free public health and the delivery of Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses.²

A recent and increased emphasis on early childhood development (ECD) also aims to improve the situation of the large numbers of young children who remain affected by poverty, and to create pathways to a more stable life for them in the future. It is generally recognised that children who have been given a better start in life will be able to grow into healthy, independent young adults, able to break the cycle of poverty with their own children.³ While this approach fits the government’s dedication to alleviating poverty in the short and long run, it runs the risk of overlooking the situation of the current youth cohort.

Aside from the Child Support Grant (CSG), little evidence-based support continues for children as they turn into adolescents and later into young adults, yet this youth stage is recognised internationally as a critical point for interventions that can lead to long-lasting change.⁴ Informed by a life course understanding of development, this issue of the *South African Child Gauge* therefore highlights the precarious situation of children as they transition into young adulthood, with a focus on youth aged 15 – 24 years. More than half of all young people in South Africa live in income poverty⁵ and are faced with low levels of education, high levels of unemployment and a very restricted access to the social grant system. If left unchanged, this generation of young people will continue to see their lives constrained. The next generation of children, who will be raised by today’s youth, will grow up in an equally precarious context.⁶

This essay considers the following questions:

- Why focus on youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty in South Africa?
- What is known about the “born free” generation in South Africa?
- What do we mean by the intergenerational transmission of poverty?

- What dimensions of poverty affect South Africa’s youth?
- What are the potential windows of opportunity for intervention?
- What is the existing policy framework on youth in South Africa?

Why focus on youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty in South Africa?

At the time of South Africa’s transition to democracy, hopes were high for the generation of children who were being born. Today, 21 years into democracy, this cohort is “coming of age”. They form a particularly large part of South Africa’s population: just under 50% of the current population are under the age of 25, and just over 20% are between the ages of 15 and 24.⁷ Researchers and politicians often refer to these young people as the “Born Frees”. Born into a democratic South Africa that theoretically should have opened up “opportunities for all”, they are considered a possible “demographic dividend”,⁸ which could help drive growth and reduce dependency ratios¹.

Yet despite the many promises of a “better life for all”, racial, class and gender inequalities continue to shape young people’s lives, dreams and opportunities. Especially among previously disadvantaged groups, levels of school drop-out, un(der)employment and discouraged work-seekers are high. The situation has led many to think of young people in South Africa as “a lost generation” or a “ticking time bomb” needing to be “diffused”.⁹ The heightened sense of exclusion among young people is expected to increase “levels of frustration and impatience”. South Africa’s National Development Plan (NDP) warns that the country must “find ways to reduce alarming levels of youth unemployment and to provide young people with broader opportunities ... Failure to act will threaten democratic gains”.¹⁰ While there is little or no evidence to suggest that young people would be more inclined to take part in violent protests or national conflict,¹¹ failure to act would indeed threaten democratic gains as it would mean a failure to fulfil young people’s constitutional rights. It would lead to lower levels of physical and mental well-being among the current youth cohort, and continue to feed the intergenerational cycle of exclusion and poverty.¹²

i The dependency ratio is calculated by considering the number of children (0 – 14-year-olds) and older persons (65 years or over) in relation to the working-age population (15 – 64-year-olds).

ii The life course approach recognises that developments during childhood, adolescence and young adulthood influence well-being and socio-economic outcomes in later life, while also considering that a person’s life course trajectory is shaped by broader socio-economic factors (see no. 4 [Dornan, 2014] in the references).

It is therefore important for policies, programmes and interventions to extend beyond childhood and to take into account other key points in the life cycle, such as the transition from childhood to adolescence, and from youth to adulthood.ⁱⁱⁱ These are considered crucial stages of development. Adolescence, for instance, is the time in which children “move toward social and economic independence, develop identity, and acquire skills needed to carry out adult relationships and roles. ... it is a time of tremendous growth and potential but also of considerable risk during which social contexts exert powerful influences”.¹³ Interventions that help youth through these transitions are key to their future well-being.

By taking stock of “the state of youth” today, this issue of the *South African Child Gauge* allows for reflection on the changes that are necessary to increase the life chances of these young people and those of the next generation of children. In order to focus specifically on the transitions from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to young adulthood, this issue of the *Child Gauge* uses the international definition of “youth” as those between the ages of 15 and 24.

The South African government’s definition of youth is broader and includes those aged 14 – 35 years, recognising that young people’s transition to an “independent, sustainable livelihood can take a relatively long time”.¹⁴ But using one large age cohort without further distinction between age groups may hinder an understanding of the potentially very different needs, experiences and expectations of younger and older “youth”: for example, the needs of a 30-year-old parent may be different to those of a 15-year-old student. This makes it difficult to be focused and specific about the policies and interventions aimed at improving young people’s lives. We therefore choose to use the more narrow definition, following common international practice.¹⁵

What is known about the “born free” generation in South Africa?

Could it be that the continued emphasis on possibilities for this so-called “born free” generation is misguided and hinders a full understanding of the policy interventions needed to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty? This generation was born into a situation characterised by high levels of inequality and poverty that were the consequence of deliberate apartheid-era policies. Those policies created a range of barriers – or structural constraintsⁱⁱⁱ – for the vast majority of South Africa’s people, severely limiting their choices and possibilities for upward socio-economic mobility. And while the advent of the post-apartheid period brought political freedom, it left in place these legacies of disadvantage.

Poverty and inequality rooted in apartheid past^{iv}

From 1948 to the late 1980s, the official apartheid state implemented a series of regulations that would not only physically

segregate population groups but would also treat them differently before the law. The aim was to support and protect the superiority of the country’s white minority in all spheres of life.

Barriers were erected against any attempt to gain a political voice, or to find routes for upward social mobility, for the country’s African majority. They were systematically excluded, to various degrees, from education, employment, business opportunities, housing and land.¹⁶ Expenditure for services was differentiated according to race with the lowest levels of spending in education, health care, housing, and so on, allocated to the African majority. Cities were reshaped and, at the same time, millions were moved into separate “homelands”. High levels of poverty in these rural areas forced many men into a migrant labour system that tore their families apart.¹⁷

The apartheid policy framework and its rigorous implementation created an enormous financial, human and social capital deficit in the parental generation of many of today’s “Born Frees”. For instance, at the end of 1996, the difference in educational attainment between Africans and Whites was enormous. While the majority of young White adults had graduated from high school or enrolled in higher education, only 18% of African youth and 24% of Coloured youth had the same levels of schooling. Overall, White adults had an average of 12 years of education, whereas Coloured and African adults had an average of eight and six years respectively.^v Africans who did reach higher levels of education would have had to do so mainly through the Bantu education system, which was designed intentionally to provide lower levels of skills to Africans than to their White, Indian and Coloured peers.

This educational deficit translated into large inequalities in employment prospects, which were reinforced by formal discrimination in the apartheid labour market. The apartheid system limited employment opportunities to certain racial groups, for example, reserving particular occupations in the mining and manufacturing industries specifically for White workers. Menial and semi-skilled positions were reserved for those who were considered “Non-White”, and who had no access to managerial positions and higher, more stable incomes.

It is into that unequal society that today’s “Born Frees” were born. The first decades of their lives did indeed evolve in a politically liberated South Africa, where a range of policies and interventions have aimed to mitigate the inequalities of the past: a single educational system was introduced and schools were officially obliged to accept all children without discrimination; the social grant system was expanded; labour regulations were put in place to protect workers’ rights; affirmative action policies were introduced; the delivery of public services and formal houses increased steeply.

Yet the quality of life and pathways to a better future for many young people today are still hindered by the disadvantage and

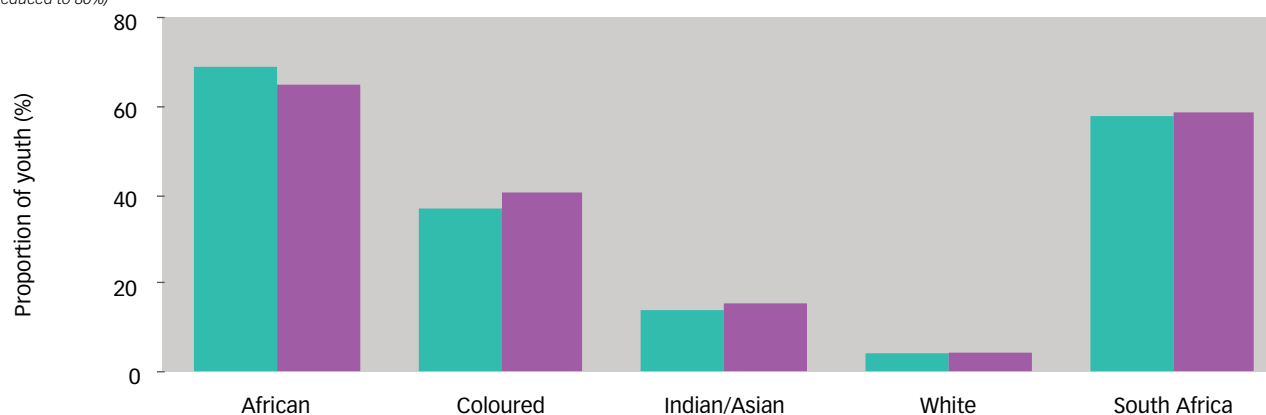
iii Economic, political and other institutions of a society, as well as dominant values and norms that “structure”, “shape” or “constrain” people’s lives, opportunities and choices.

iv This section draws heavily on and contains extracts from chapter 2, “Apartheid legacies”, in: Newman K & De Lannoy A (2014) *After Freedom, the Rise of a Post-apartheid Generation in Democratic South Africa*. Boston, US: Beacon Press. (PP. 20-39)

v Authors’ own calculations based on weighted data from the Census 1996 10% sample.

Figure 1: Number and proportion of youth living in income-poor households, by race, 1996 & 2011

("Upper bound" poverty line: individuals living in households with monthly per capita income less than R620, in 2011 Rands)
(Y-axis reduced to 80%)



1996	68.8%	37.2%	13.8%	4.1%	57.4%
	3,032,000	223,000	24,000	23,000	3,323,000
2011	64.8%	40.4%	15.4%	4.4%	58.5%
	4,627,000	297,000	27,000	19,000	4,981,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (1996, 2011) *Census*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Emily Frame, Poverty and Inequality Initiative, UCT.

Notes: Youth are defined as persons aged 15 – 24 years. For 2011, the Stats SA upper-bound poverty line of R620 per person per month was used and for comparability, this figure was deflated, using a CPI deflator, to R258 for 1996. Individuals in households captured as having zero income or missing income were excluded from the analysis in both years. Calculations based on weighted data from the Census 1996 and 2011 10% samples.

vulnerabilities experienced by their parents. Figure 1 illustrates how poverty levels among this young generation remain strikingly close to those of their parental generation (most of whom would have been young people in 1996), with particularly high levels of poverty among African and Coloured youth in both years.

Understanding the multiple dimensions of poverty

Analyses of the Census data show that, in 2011, 53% of the South African population was still living below the upper-bound poverty line of R620 per person per month.

Table 1 shows that income poverty, as measured using the Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) upper-bound, lower-bound and food poverty lines, remains strongly associated with race, gender and age. Africans, females, children and youth are over-represented among the poor. In particular, 65% of children and 59% of young people are living below the upper-bound poverty line, while only 43% of the adult population fall below this line.

However, poverty is not only experienced in the form of financial deprivation but also through limited access to public goods such as (good quality) education, health care, clean water, sanitation, "proper" housing, and so on.¹⁸

*Poverty is about deprivation in many dimensions – hunger and under nutrition, dirty drinking water, illiteracy, a lack of access to health services, social isolation and exploitation, as well as low income and assets.*¹⁹

These various dimensions of poverty (or "vulnerabilities") are often interrelated: for example, ill health can compromise educational outcomes, which in turn determine employment chances and

income. Similarly, low income may affect mental well-being, which may influence one's ability to work, and income.²⁰ All are key mechanisms in the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Table 1: Income poverty by race, gender and age, 2011

	Upper-bound poverty line (%)	Lower-bound poverty line (%)	Food poverty line (%)
By race			
African	60.3	48.1	37.6
Coloured	38.5	25.4	17.6
Indian/Asian	14.2	8.5	6.0
White	4.0	2.3	1.7
By gender			
Male	50.1	38.9	30.1
Female	55.0	43.6	33.9
By age			
Children (0 – 14)	65.0	53.9	42.9
Youth (15 – 24)	58.5	47.0	37.1
Adults (25+)	42.7	31.3	23.5
Total	52.6	41.3	32.1

Source: Statistics South Africa (2011) *Census*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

Analysis by Emily Frame, Poverty and Inequality Initiative, UCT

Notes: The upper-bound, lower-bound and food poverty lines are derived by Stats SA. Their Rand values, in 2011 prices, are R620, R443 and R321 per person per month respectively. Individuals in households captured as having zero income or missing income were excluded from the analysis. Calculations based on weighted data from the Census 1996 and 2011 10% samples.

Case 1: Siya's story – How the lack of various kinds of capital impacts on young people's chances to upward mobility

Siya (not his real name) was 22 and living in Gugulethu, Cape Town, with his grandmother, cousin, the cousin's mother and daughter. The grandmother's pension was the family's main income, supplemented by Siya's earnings from small jobs. His siblings lived in the Eastern Cape. Both Siya's parents had passed away. His mother got sick and died in 1997; his father was shot in Gugulethu in 2003 "over nothing ... he died for nothing".

Originally, Siya had hoped to study engineering at the University of Cape Town, but he was told his matric results were too weak to enter the mainstream programme. He then decided to apply at the (then) Cape Technikon, and only later realised that the university might have been an option if someone had explained the process to him more clearly:

I went to UCT and they told me to do a bridging programme for one year before. I said, one year, it was going to be a waste of time. What I am told now [is that] you also happen to do something for one year, but still finish on time. No one ever tells you about these things.

Siya's father had been paying for his civil engineering study at the Cape Technikon. After his death, Siya informed the Technikon and applied for several funding possibilities, but was unsuccessful and could not continue his studies. Yet he placed an enormous emphasis on the importance of education for his

future. He felt disappointed and depressed about being "stuck" in poverty, and stressed that he was not where he "would have wanted to be":

When I was six I had this dream of driving a car and living in my own flat, that sort of thing. I am now 21 years old; people of my age have cars and live in their own space, they are not staying with grandmothers, ... those are the sort of things that stress me.

Nevertheless, Siya described himself as a "go-getter", an outgoing person with a strong interest in community development: "I care, and I would like to make a difference in whatever way." He looked for, and found, short-term employment and managed to fund short courses for himself. Two years after he had to leave college, he succeeded in securing funding and picked up his part-time studies at the Cape Technikon. He struggled to catch up with schoolwork after his very long absence, but remained determined. He struggled also with his home situation: his grandmother had fallen ill and had moved back to the Eastern Cape. Siya felt he no longer had a real home and claimed that the remainder of the family with whom he now lived did not give him support for his education. He was very concerned he would not make it through the exams at the end of the year because of all the worries he had.

Source: De Lannoy A (2008) *Educational Decision-Making in an Era of AIDS*. PhD Thesis, Department of Sociology. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

What do we mean by the intergenerational transmission of poverty?

The poverty dynamics described above, if left unchecked, are likely to also have a negative influence on the lives of the next generation:²¹ they will be *transmitted* from one generation to the next. This happens as older generations transmit different "capitals" to the younger ones, such as:²²

- financial capital (assets, but also debt, land, cash and so on);
- human capital (levels of education, but also health or illness, coping strategies and so on);
- cultural capital (knowledge of systems such as education and the labour market);
- social capital (networks between individuals and groups that allow people to collaborate);
- symbolic capital (status, place in society).²³

Transfer of these capitals is influenced by a complex set of factors, both within and outside an individual's household.

At an individual level, physical and mental health, for instance, may be transmitted across the generations through various mechanisms. In South Africa, African women are particularly vulnerable to depression as a result of the combination of high levels of poverty, unemployment and violence.²⁴ If left untreated,

their adolescent children too may suffer from mental disorders, and depression increases the risk of drop-out amongst school-going girls.²⁵

At the household level, resources play a significant role. A child born in a poorer family is more likely to have restricted opportunities throughout his or her life, compared to a child born in a wealthier household. The latter will have better access to services, resources, knowledge and support, all of which impact on the kinds of choices and decisions the family and the child can make about his or her life – for example, what schools they can attend and their approach to schooling.²⁶ Assets (or debts) accumulated within a household also influence this kind of decision-making. Outside of the household, broader social determinants of the intergenerational transmission of poverty include a shortage of jobs driven by slow economic growth, and discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, or disability.²⁷

It is clear that the apartheid system created inequality not only in terms of income or personal well-being, but also in terms of other kinds of capital that enable or impede progress for youth today. Youth from lower-class backgrounds may thus lack the necessary kinds of "capital" to enable upward social mobility.²⁸ They may lack knowledge and information ("cultural capital") about the educational and labour market that they need to make

informed choices. Youth from poorer environments may also lack the financial means (“economic capital”), the status or prestige (“symbolic capital”) and the networks (“social capital”) that would provide them with the leverage needed to enter better educational institutions. For example, high school learners in South Africa need to decide on their final matric subjects as early as grade 9, and that decision will in turn define their opportunities for further study and employment. In a context where parents, teachers and surrounding institutions may themselves lack the information necessary to make an informed choice, this may lead to a foreclosure of opportunities.

Policies and interventions aimed at breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty therefore need to extend beyond a focus on income and help young people access a range of different kinds of “capital”.²⁹ In the case of Siya (see case 1), for instance, a one-stop, integrated intervention that provided him with emotional and social care, and that informed him about his educational, funding and housing options could have made a world of difference.

What dimensions of poverty affect South Africa’s youth?

Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has seen some upward social mobility among the African population. Nationally representative studies such as the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) allow comparison of the outcomes of parents and their children. Findings show that the number of completed years of education have increased substantially across the generations: from three years for grandparents, to five – six years for parents, and an average of 10 years for the current generation.³⁰

However, this upward trend in education has not translated into increased employment or a positive change in the type of employment that people take up. Despite the youth’s higher levels of education, overall educational attainment remains low and literacy and numeracy levels are weak, especially among the poorer African and Coloured youth. Access to good quality education remains constrained for young people from poorer backgrounds and more than half of all pupils in South Africa drop out of high school before completing their final matric examination³¹ (see the essay on p. 34). As a consequence, many are unable to access higher education and training (see the post-school essay on p. 42). Yet, in the contemporary labour market, it is these higher levels of education that have a positive impact on employment opportunities and income and are necessary to break the intergenerational cycle.³²

Unemployment rates in the country are high: almost 25% according to the official definition, and over 40% when including those people who have become discouraged and have given up looking for work. The majority of those who are unemployed are African. In the first quarter of 2015, Stats SA estimated that the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 – 34 was just under 37%, compared to 17% among adults aged 35 – 64 and a national average unemployment rate of about 26%.³³ Incorporating the numbers of

young people who are unemployed but who have given up looking for work would place the unemployment rate among young people at over 44%.^{vi}

Even for many of those who are employed, higher levels of schooling have not translated into better jobs than their parents. Almost half of all African children in the country end up with a job that sits at the same skills level as their parents, which are generally, and because of historical reasons, among the lowest skills levels in the country.³⁴ High levels of unemployment and employment at the lowest skills levels have an inevitable effect on income (see the essay on p. 51). Income, in turn, is also related to other mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of poverty including: nutrition, stress levels, restricted access to and uptake of health care (see p. 60), the role of parenting (discussed in the essay on p. 69), a sense of isolation (pp. 83) and restricted access to basic services and housing, that affect parents, younger children and older youth.³⁵

In general then, this issue of the *Child Gauge* seeks to understand the dynamics of persistent, intergenerational poverty by exploring in detail many of the dimensions that drive this cycle. It is important, however, to remember that all of these dimensions are interrelated: “most mechanisms work simultaneously, reinforcing each other in different directions”.³⁶ (For example, the essay on p. 75 captures some of this by looking at both the drivers and impact of mobility during the youth stage.)

Figure 2 illustrates how, despite improvements in education and access to household services, the patterns of deprivation among this younger generation remain very similar to those of their parents (most of whom would have been young people in 1996).

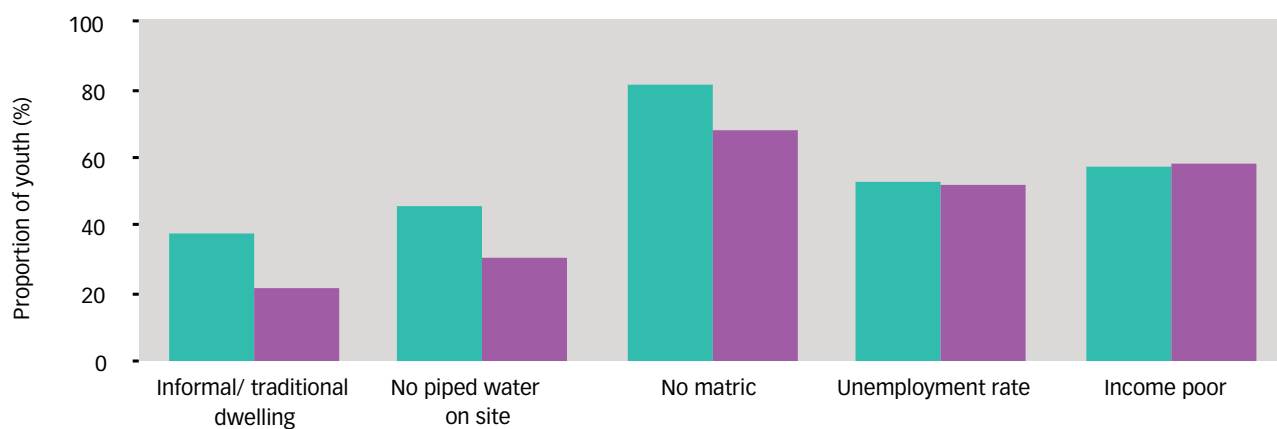
Understanding the multiple dimensions of poverty and how they intersect is crucial in developing efficient and comprehensive policies that support today’s youth as they strive to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. It is not sufficient, for example, to think about young people as “only unemployed”. The majority of them also lack access to quality education, financial resources to study, information that would support them in their decision-making around health and sexual relations, and social networks that can help them think through further schooling or migration. In recent years, innovative tools have been developed to assess multidimensional poverty. In particular, the Alkire Foster method has gained traction among policy-makers because of its ability to analyse multiple deprivations that affect poor individuals at the same time (as outlined in box 1 on p. 29).³⁷

What are the potential windows of opportunity?

How then, can the negative cycles of poverty transmission be disrupted? Many of the social, economic, institutional and political drivers of the intergenerational transmission of poverty can be interrupted by factors that are equally structural, for example, through the extended social grants system and other aspects of the social wage package. These are, in essence, “public transfers”

vi Depending on how the youth age group is defined, this figure goes up even more. In the second quarter of 2012, among 20- to 24-year-old Africans, the broad unemployment rate was around 66%, according to: Levinsohn J (2014) Youth unemployment policy. In: Bhorat H, Hirsch A, Kanbur R & Ncube M (eds) *The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Figure 2: Patterns of deprivation in the youth population, 1996 and 2011



1996	37.7%	46.0%	81.8%	53.2%	57.4%
2011	21.4%	30.9%	68.2%	52.2%	58.5%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2011) *Census*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Emily Frame, Poverty and Inequality Initiative, UCT.
Notes: Youth are defined as persons aged 15 – 24 years. The unemployment rate for the youth population is based on the narrow definition. Income-poor youth are defined as youth living in households with per capita monthly incomes below the Stats SA upper-bound poverty line of R620 for 2011. For comparability, this figure was deflated, using a CPI deflator, to R258 for 1996. Individuals in households captured as having zero incomes or missing incomes were excluded from the analysis in both years. Calculations based on weighted data from the Census 1996 and 2011 10% samples.

of resources between the generations. The redistribution of funds through the tax system, for example, has allowed for an expanded Child Support Grant system and Old Age Pension system. Both of these in turn have a proven positive effect not only on the recipients of the grants but also on their households.

Analyses of NIDS have, for instance, indicated that job search among young people increases in households that access the Old Age Pension.³⁸ Also, access to social grants helps mitigate the intergenerational transmission of mental health problems from mothers to adolescent children.³⁹ Social grants are also linked to a range of other interventions including free access to health care and school-fee exemptions, which is important as learners consistently indicate that a lack of funding is one of the main reasons for dropping out of school (see analysis of school attendance on p. 34).

However, such public transfers of resources alone may be insufficient to break the cycle: in the case of education, for example, expenses consist of more than just fees and include also the cost of books, transport, uniforms, extra-curricular activities, and so on. The *quality* of education matters too, as it influences the levels of knowledge and skills that youth can draw on when they leave school and attempt to access either higher education or the labour market.

Importantly though, the interruption of the intergenerational transmission of poverty is not only dependent on these kinds of structural interventions. It also depends on young people's agency and resilience. The extent to which individuals are able to, and do, act upon their situation, the kinds of strategies they apply in attempting to bring about change, and the ways in which they react to opportunities available to them may all help to bring about

change. Popular media reports may not often present them as such, but young people do not simply “undergo” their context, they act upon it as well.

The majority of poor, African youth also have very high aspirations. Many describe their desire for “a better life” with stable jobs and higher income and many perceive education and higher education as the main pathway to achieving their dreams⁴⁰ (as illustrated by Siya's story in case 1). It is therefore essential to understand how young people from impoverished backgrounds manage to build on their aspirations and change their trajectories in order to develop interventions and policies that support youth in creating meaningful lives for them and their families. Yet agency and resilience and their role in breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty are not very well understood.

The essays contained in this *Child Gauge* describe and explore the existing evidence on various factors that contribute to the presently dire situation of many young people and the longer-term impact of those factors. Delivering quality education, preventing school drop-out, enabling access to higher education, training and the labour market, understanding and alleviating the heavy burden of disease among young people, supporting their sense of belonging and citizenship in the broader South African context – these are all areas that need to be addressed to break the cycle of persistent poverty. Teasing out the complex interrelationships between the structural constraints confronting young people and their aspirations and behaviour is crucial. It is within that reality that policies aimed at youth development need to intervene, and it is imperative that these policies open up new possibilities for youth to which they are able and willing to respond.

What is the existing policy framework on youth in South Africa?

... human lives are battered and diminished in all kinds of different ways, and the first task, seen in this perspective, is to acknowledge that deprivations of very different kinds have to be accommodated within a general overarching framework [emphasis added]⁴¹

While much of the current situation of young people can be considered to have its roots in apartheid, it is equally important to ask why more than 20 years of post-apartheid policies and interventions have not managed to make a significant shift in the life chances of today's youth.

Since the 1990s, South Africa has at least officially shown a concern with youth development, but the actual implementation of effective, well-grounded policies to support youth development has been lacking.

The African National Congress (ANC) promised the establishment of a national youth service in its 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme and, in 1996, the National Youth Commission was established. The National Youth Development Policy Framework⁴² set out recommendations for 2002 – 2007, followed by the establishment of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) in 2008, and several revised National Youth Development Plans.

The NYDA's mandate is broad and ranges from "initiating, designing, co-ordinating, evaluating and monitoring all programmes aimed at integrating the youth into the economy and society in general" and "promoting a uniform approach by all organs of the state, private sector and non-governmental organisations".^{vii}

Alongside the NYDA, there are currently also "youth desks" in various government departments at national and provincial level and a youth desk in the Presidency but there is no youth ministry, nor a parliamentary oversight committee with a specific focus on youth matters.^{viii} The roles of these various "desks" and "agencies" remain unclear and uncoordinated. This hinders a truly integrated approach to youth development that is grounded in a thorough understanding of the realities of youth and the way in which multiple dimensions of poverty intersect and constrain young people's life chances.

The current National Youth Policy (2015 – 2020)⁴³ attempts to address some of these concerns. It recognises that government has in previous years not necessarily taken the views and realities of youth into account when drafting policies and interventions, and that fragmentation and a lack of co-ordination between various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders have hindered the development and implementation of a coherent and efficient youth development policy. It also calls on various government departments to focus on five pillars that would enable youth development:

1. economic inclusion and participation;
2. education, skills and training;
3. health and well-being;
4. nation-building and social cohesion; and
5. building a youth machinery for efficient delivery and responsibilities.

The policy focuses on both "mainstreaming" youth-related issues within these departments, and delivering "dedicated youth platforms" to address issues 1 to 4. However, it does little to engage with the interconnectedness of these issues. Indeed, while its intention seems otherwise, the policy continues to promote a fragmented approach to youth development with a proliferation of agencies and various kinds of "desks" at the local, provincial and national government levels. The concluding essay (p. 92) picks up this discussion, drawing on the evidence from the various essays.

The evidence and cases presented in this issue illustrate the need for a clear, powerful and integrated approach to fulfil young people's basic constitutional rights. This requires a dedicated, central coordinating mechanism to guide and support the various government departments in their coordination of youth-related development programmes and interventions. It remains unclear how the work of the various desks will be coordinated, but also how the relevant departments (such as the Department of Small Business Development, Department of Higher Education and Training and Department of Health) will be made aware of, and supported in, their roles and duties. Without buy-in from these different role-players and a commitment to share responsibilities and information with the other departments, the recommendations contained in the policy run the risk of – yet again – remaining a wish list.

vii For a complete overview, see the National Youth Development Policy 2015 – 2020.

viii The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation currently carries the responsibility of holding government (and the NYDA) responsible for delivering on their promises, but there is little coordination or alignment between this committee and the Presidency.

Box 1: Measuring multidimensional poverty among the youth

Money-metric measures of poverty do not fully capture the experience of poor people. Research shows that the poor define poverty much more broadly, citing multiple dimensions of deprivation that are interrelated and often co-occur.⁴⁴ The Alkire Foster method is a way of measuring poverty that takes into account these multiple forms of deprivation.

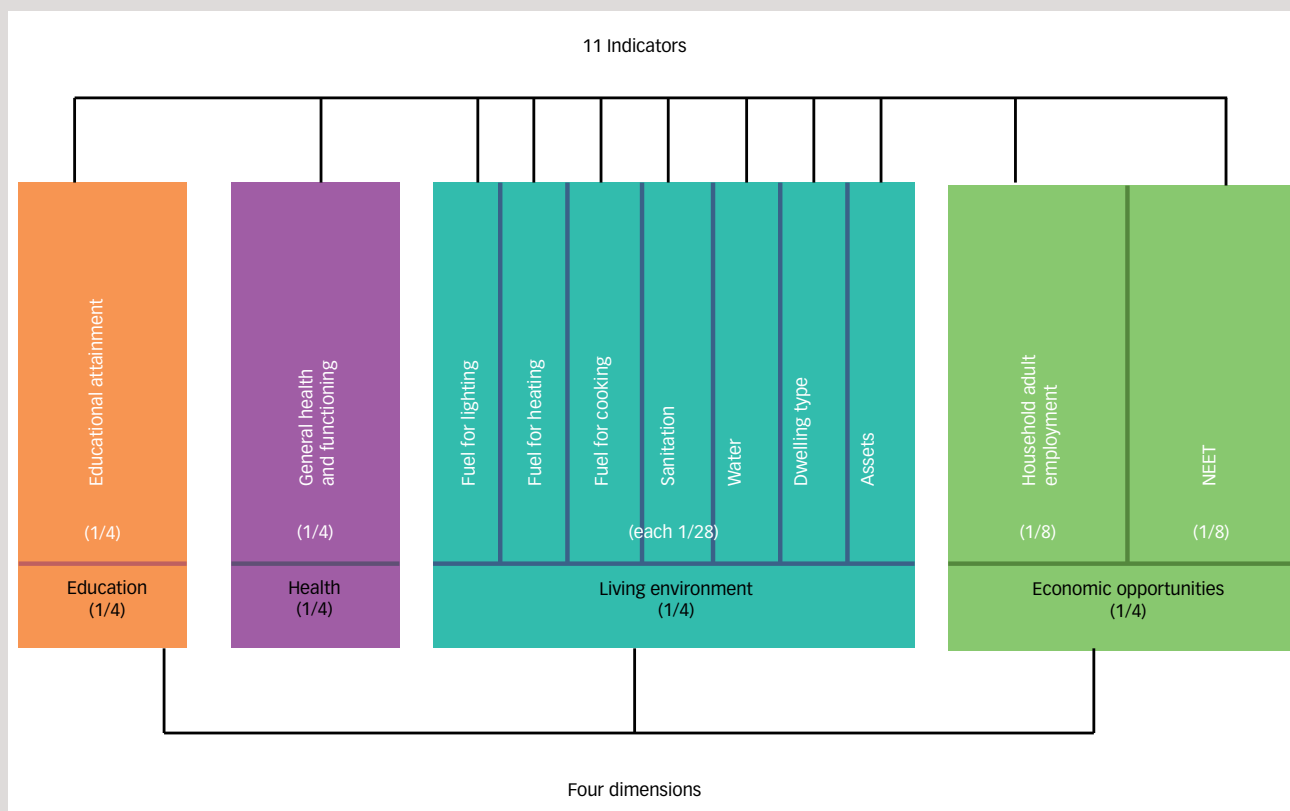
Applying this method, a Youth Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for individuals aged 15 – 24 was constructed using data from the 2011 Census. While several analyses of multidimensional poverty in South Africa exist, most look at deprivation at the household level.⁴⁵ By including dimensions and indicators that reflect experiences unique or particularly relevant to young people, the Youth MPI aims to provide a youth-focused perspective of deprivation.

The Youth MPI comprises 11 indicators in the dimensions of education, health, living environment and economic opportunities (as illustrated in figure 3).^{ix} Each of the indicators is associated with a deprivation cut-off that defines whether a young person is deprived in that area. For example, under

sanitation, a young person is defined as deprived if he or she is living in a household without a flush toilet;^x and under “NEET”, a young person is defined as deprived if he or she is not in employment, education or training. For a full list of the deprivation cut-offs associated with each indicator, see table 2 on page 30.

Using these cut-offs, the number of deprivations each young person experiences is added up, with the four dimensions receiving equal importance in the overall score. If a young person is deprived in a third or more of the indicators, he or she is considered multidimensionally poor. With these stipulations, one can calculate the percentage of youth who are multidimensionally poor (the incidence of poverty) as well as the average proportion of dimensions in which poor youth are deprived (the average intensity of poverty). The results show that in 2011, 33% of young people were multidimensionally poor (incidence of poverty), and that, on average, those young people who were multidimensionally poor experienced deprivation in 50% of the indicators (intensity of poverty).

Figure 3: Components of the Youth Multidimensional Poverty Index



Source: Adapted from: Alkire S & Santos ME (2014) Measuring acute poverty in the developing world: Robustness and scope of the Multidimensional Poverty Index. *World Development*, 59: 251-274.

ix The development of the South African Youth MPI is work in progress. Further details on the design and methodology will be available in: Leibbrandt M, De Lannoy A & Frame E (forthcoming) *Measuring Multidimensional Youth Poverty in South Africa at the Sub-national Level*. SALDRU Working Paper. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT.

x Our definition of the water and sanitation indicators is based on Stats SA's MPI work (see no. 45 in the references).

The Youth MPI can be used as an analytical tool to highlight the spatial patterns of youth poverty. This is important in a context like South Africa, where advantage and disadvantage are spatially concentrated. Figure 4 shows how the incidence of multidimensional poverty among the youth population varies across municipalities, with the darker red indicating a higher percentage of poor youth in those municipalities. This map highlights the deep levels of deprivation that continue to be found within the former homeland areas, even within the youth cohort.

The overall Youth MPI is calculated by multiplying the incidence of poverty by the average intensity. Figure 5 maps

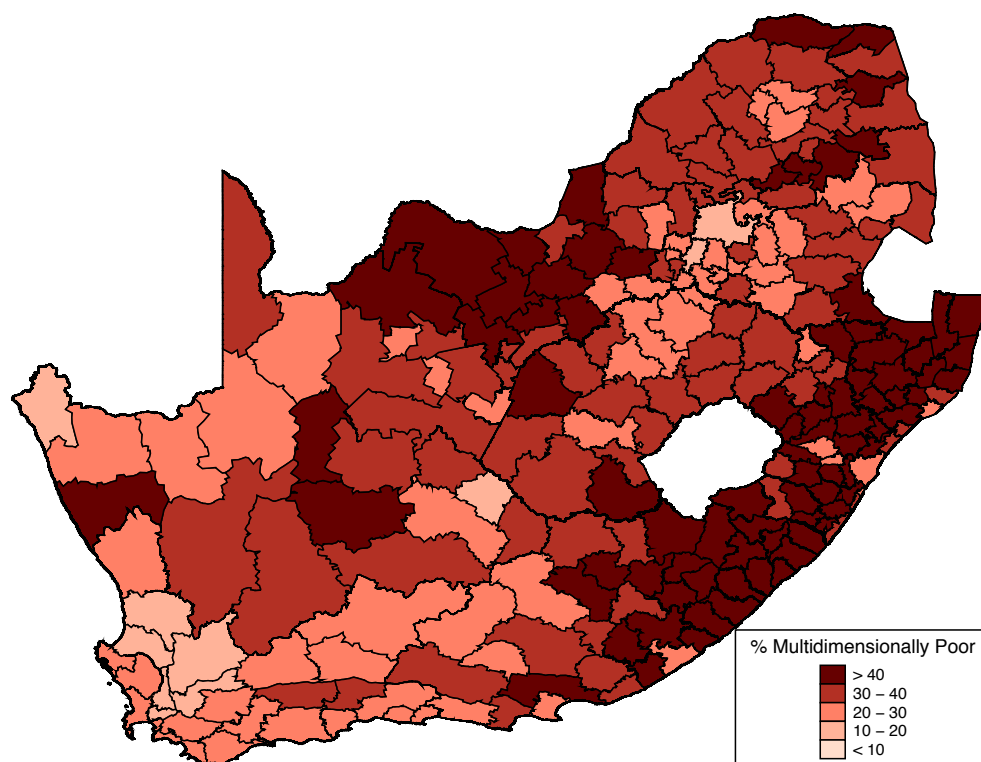
the Youth MPI for each municipality in South Africa, with the darker red indicating a higher score and therefore greater poverty for the youth population in those municipalities. The strength of this index is that it reflects both the percentage of the youth population that is poor *as well as* the intensity of the deprivation suffered. Within one province, for example, two municipalities may have a similar percentage of multidimensionally poor youth, but the intensity of deprivation may be higher in one municipality. By combining incidence and intensity, the overall index is able to highlight these differences and therefore provide a more nuanced picture of poverty than traditional measures.

Table 2: Deprivation cut-offs for the Youth Multidimensional Poverty Index

Dimensions of poverty	Indicator	Deprived if...
Education	Educational attainment	Individual is age 15 – 16 and has completed less than primary school Individual is age 17 – 20 and has completed less than grade 9 Individual is age 21 – 24 and has completed less than matric or matric equivalent
Health	General health and functioning	Individual experiences difficulty in one or more functions: hearing, vision, communication, mobility (walking or climbing stairs), cognition (remembering or concentrating)
Living environment	Fuel for lighting	Individual is living in a household that is using paraffin/candles/ nothing/other for lighting
	Fuel for heating	Individual is living in a household that is using paraffin/wood/coal/ dung/other/none for heating
	Fuel for cooking	Individual is living in a household that is using paraffin/wood/coal/ dung/other/none for cooking
	Sanitation	Individual is living in a household without a flush toilet
	Water	Individual is living in a household without piped water on site
	Dwelling type	Individual is living in a household that is an informal shack/traditional dwelling/caravan/tent/other
	Assets	Individual is living in a household that does not own more than two of: radio, TV, landline, mobile phone, bike, motorbike or refrigerator AND does not own a car or truck
Economic opportunities	Household adult employment	Individual is living in a household where no working-age adults (18 – 64) are employed
	NEET	Individual is not in education, employment or training

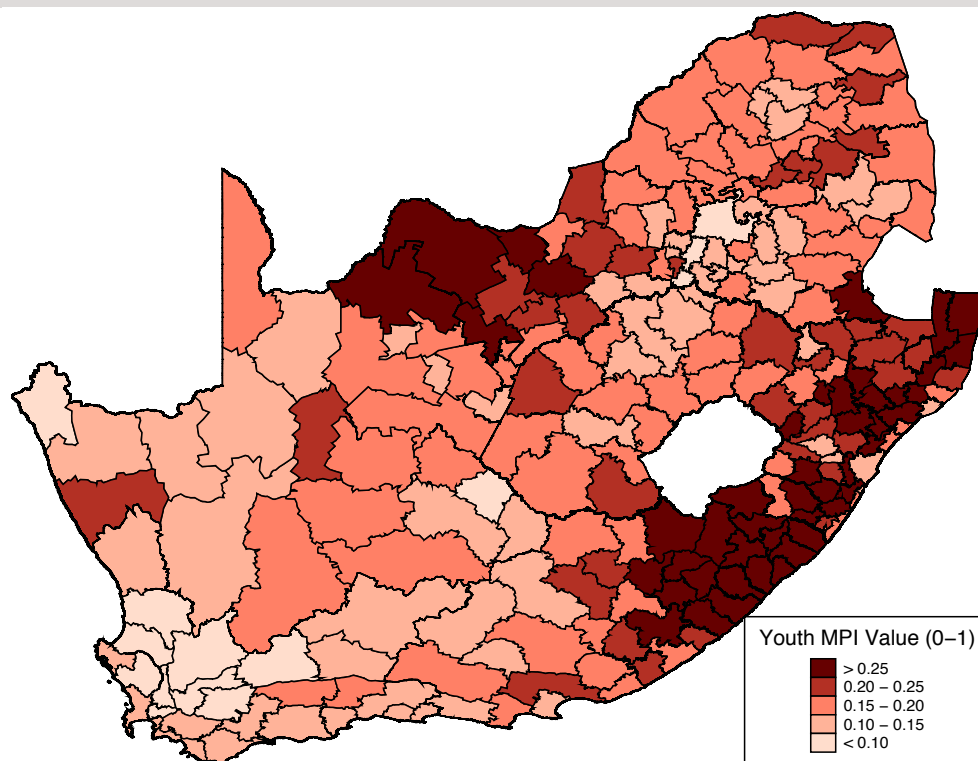
Source: Adapted from: Alkire S & Santos ME (2014) Measuring acute poverty in the developing world: Robustness and scope of the Multidimensional Poverty Index. *World Development*, 59: 251-274.

Figure 4: Incidence of multidimensional poverty amongst youth in South Africa, by municipality, 2011



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011) *Census*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Calculations by Emily Frame, Poverty and Inequality Initiative, UCT, based on weighted data from the Census 2011 10% sample.

Figure 5: Youth Multidimensional Poverty Index, by municipality, 2011

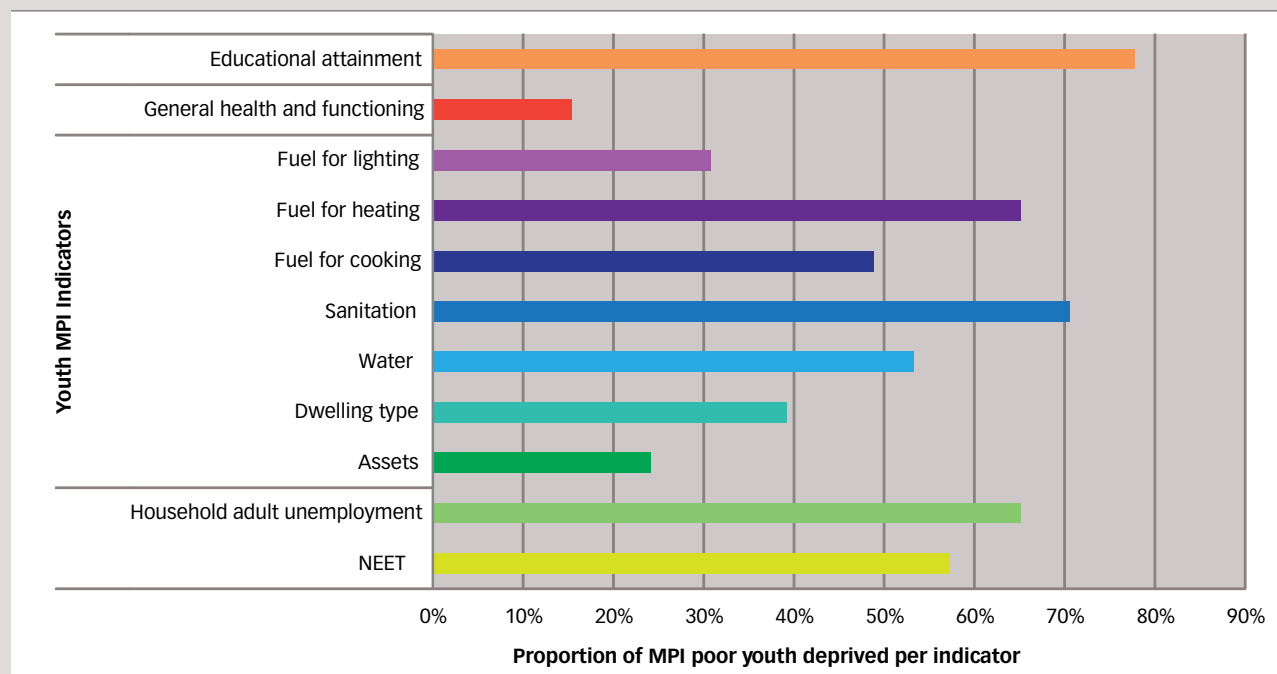


Source: Statistics South Africa (2011) *Census*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Calculations by Emily Frame, Poverty and Inequality Initiative, UCT, based on weighted data from the Census 2011 10% sample.

The Youth MPI can be unpacked in a number of ways to provide valuable insights about multidimensional poverty in the youth population. Figure 6, for example, shows the proportion of the youth population that is poor *and* deprived in each indicator. Notably, deprivation in educational attainment and sanitation is especially high, affecting 78% and 70% of the multidimensionally poor youth respectively.

Youth-centered analyses of deprivation are key to improving our understanding of the situation of young people in South Africa. The Youth MPI is a valuable tool for such analyses as it provides a robust assessment of multidimensional poverty that is uniquely suited to youth living in the South African context and is able to highlight important spatial inequalities that continue to exist.

Figure 6: Dimensions of deprivation among multidimensionally poor youth, 2011



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011) *Census*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Calculations by Emily Frame, Poverty and Inequality Initiative, UCT, based on weighted data from the Census 2011 10% sample.

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Schooling in South Africa: How low-quality education becomes a poverty trapⁱ

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The strong legacy of apartheid and the consequent correlation between education and wealth have meant that, generally speaking, poorer learners in South Africa perform worse academically. Although racial segregation has been abolished for 20 years, schools which served predominantly White learners under apartheid remain functional (although now racially mixed), while the vast majority of those which served Black learners remain dysfunctional and unable to impart the necessary numeracy and literacy skills to learners.

The poor quality of education that learners receive helps drive an intergenerational cycle of poverty where children inherit the social standing of their parents or caregivers, irrespective of their own abilities or effort. Recent assessments show that over the past decade there has been some progress at the grade 9 level, yet performance levels remain extraordinarily low.

This essay provides an overview of educational outcomes in South Africa and discusses school drop-out rates and learning deficits in mathematics. Using this information, it shows the links between the education system and the labour market and illustrates how low-quality education becomes a poverty trap for the majority of learners in South Africa.

The essay addresses the following questions:

- What is the current level of learner achievement in South Africa?
- When do inequalities in learning outcomes begin?
- How many learners drop out of school?
- Why do learners drop out?
- What are the links between education and the labour market?
- What new policy options might address this situation?

What is the current level of learner achievement in South Africa?

Quality education can be defined as the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values that society deems valuable – usually articulated in the curriculum. While it is difficult to get reliable information on whether learners are acquiring appropriate values at school, there is considerable information on the extent to which they are acquiring the knowledge and skills expressed in the curriculum.

South Africa participates in a number of cross-national assessments of educational achievement, which makes it possible

to compare the level of learning and knowledge of learners in South Africa with those from students in other countries. These assessments include PIRLS, SACMEQ and TIMSS.ⁱⁱ Although one might be tempted to use either the matric results (grade 12) or the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results (grades 1 – 9) to determine what learners in South Africa know and can do, it is inadvisable. Firstly, the matric results only reflect the performance of half the learners who started schooling 12 years earlier because 50% of learners drop out before reaching matric (primarily in grades 10 and 11).¹ Secondly, the ANAs are still in their infancy. The difficulty levels of these tests differ between years and across grades, yielding different scores that do not necessarily have anything to do with improvements or deteriorations in learner performance.² This is in stark contrast to the international assessments that are developed by psychometric experts across the world and are comparable over time.

The latest available SACMEQ³ data of 2007 highlighted huge geographic inequalities in the country: 41% of rural grade 6 learners were functionally illiterate compared to only 13% of urban learners in the same grade. Furthermore, local grade 6 learners performed worse than learners in many poorer African countries like Kenya and Tanzania, even after accounting for non-enrolment and higher drop-out in those countries.⁴ The pre-PIRLS study of 2011 showed that large linguistic inequalities exist: of those children whose language of learning and teaching was Xitsonga, Tshivenda or Sepedi, one in two (50%) could not read by the end of grade 4 compared to one in 10 (11%) English and Afrikaans children.⁵ Learners who cannot read fluently by the end of grade 4 cannot engage with the rest of the curriculum in meaningful ways. This is primarily because in grades 1 to 3 the curriculum focuses on “learning to read”, whereas from grades 4 onwards it focuses on “reading to learn”. Therefore these children fall further and further behind as they are promoted to the next grade in spite of severe learning backlogs.

If one looks specifically at youth aged 15 and above then the only cross-national assessment in which South Africa takes part is TIMSS, which tests mathematics and science at the grade 8/9 level. Given that South Africa participated in the 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2011 TIMSS studies,⁶ these datasets allow the most extensive comparison of South Africa’s performance since the country’s transition to democracy. The TIMSS studies showed no

ⁱ The title of this chapter is similar to that of an earlier report by van der Berg et al (2011) – see no. 12 in the references. Some of the findings of that report have been included here.

ⁱⁱ PIRLS stands for the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study, SACMEQ stands for the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, and TIMSS stands for the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study.

improvement in grade 8 mathematics or science achievement between 1995, 1999 and 2003. Subsequently, it was decided that the international grade 8 tests were too difficult for South Africa's grade 8s; thus, in 2003, both grade 8 and grade 9 learners wrote the grade 8 test, and in 2011 only grade 9 learners wrote the grade 8 test.

The performance of grade 9 learners improved by approximately one-and-a-half grade levels of learning between 2003 and 2011.⁷ While this offers hope, it is difficult to celebrate given that we were starting from an extremely low base. For example, in 2011, one-third (32%) of South Africa's learners performed worse than or no better than random guessing on the multiple-choice items. Furthermore, three-quarters (76%) of grade 9 learners in 2011 still had not acquired a basic understanding of whole numbers, decimals, operations or basic graphs. In TIMSS 2003, 90% of learners had failed to acquire these skills.

Even after these improvements South Africa still performed the weakest of all participating countries, with the average grade 9 learner performing between two and three grade levels lower than the average grade 8 learner from other middle-income countries.⁸

When do inequalities in learning outcomes begin?

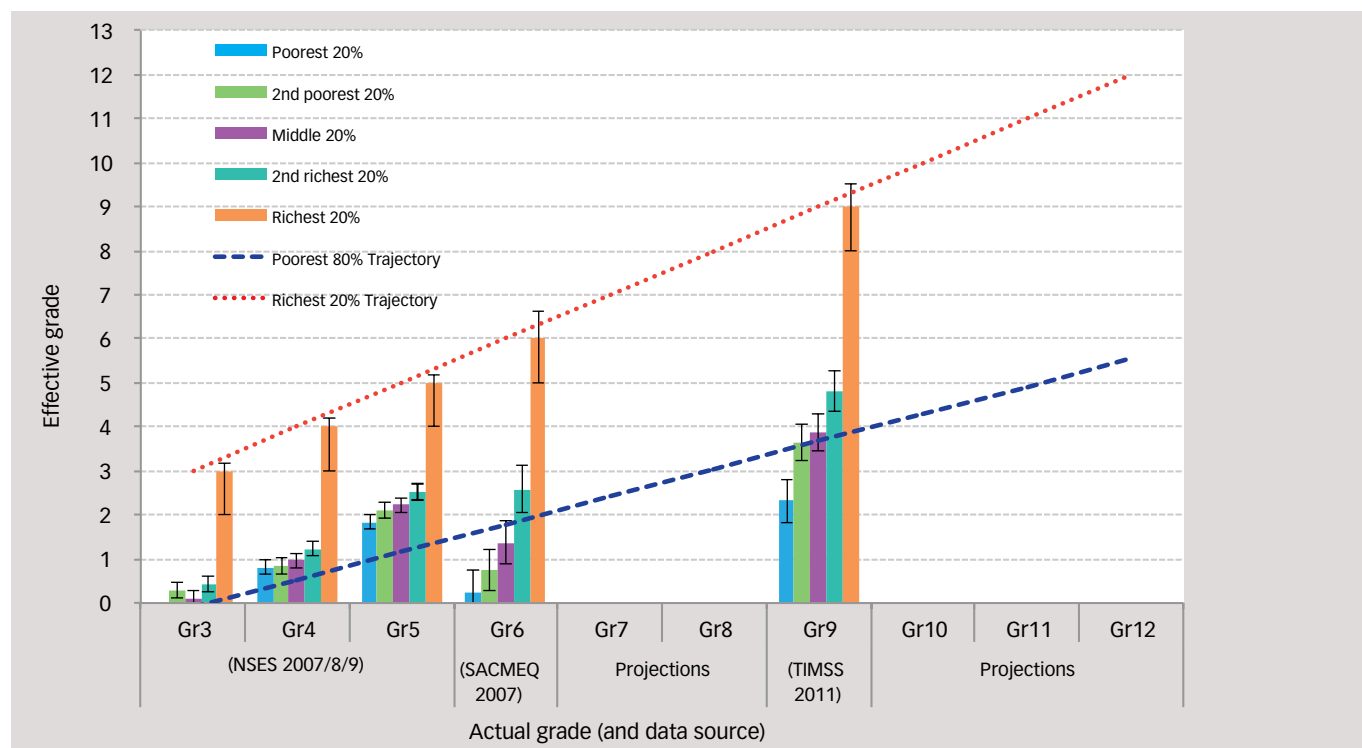
A number of studies in South Africa have shown that there are large inequalities in educational inputs, and especially in educational outcomes.⁹ The General Household Survey of 2011 showed that there are large racial inequalities in matric attainment:

only 44% of Black and Coloured youth aged 23 – 24 had attained matric compared to 83% of Indian youth and 88% of White youth. However these inequalities in educational outcomes between wealthy learners and poorer learners are already large and firmly entrenched by the age of eight. Given that learning is a cumulative process where current learning builds on previous learning (particularly in subjects like mathematics), children who do not master basic concepts in the first few years of primary schooling are at a perpetual disadvantage. The authors of *Getting Schools Working* summarise the debilitating effects of these cumulative learning deficits:

At the end of the foundation phase [grades 1 – 3], learners have only a rudimentary grasp of the principles of reading and writing ... it is very hard for learners to make up this cumulative deficit in later years ... particularly in those subjects that ... [have] vertical demarcation requirements [especially mathematics and science], the sequence, pacing, progression and coverage requirements of the high school curriculum make it virtually impossible for learners who have been disadvantaged by their early schooling to "catch up" later sufficiently to do themselves justice at the high school exit level.¹⁰

More recent analysis has used multiple nationally-representative surveys at various grades to determine when children fall behind and how this changes over time.¹¹ Using local and international assessments of mathematics achievement and converting test-

Figure 7: South African mathematics learning trajectories by national socio-economic quintiles



Sources: National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) 2007/2008/2009 for grades 3, 4 and 5; SACMEQ 2007 for grade 6; TIMSS 2011 for grade 9, including 95% confidence interval.

Notes: The confidence intervals shown as a vertical line at the top of each bar represent the range into which the true value may fall. For more information on confidence intervals, see p. 100. The NSES was nationally representative except for Gauteng, which was excluded from the sample because other testing was being conducted in that province at the same time. Given that Gauteng is one of the more urban and wealthier provinces this exclusion is likely to alter the results. If one compares SACMEQ and includes and excludes Gauteng one sees that both the average score and the standard deviation drop.¹³

score gaps into standard deviations and then into grade-levels of learning, it was possible to estimate empirically and illustrate graphically the learning trajectories of wealthy and poor learners in South Africa. The key finding emerging from this research is that, by grade 3, children in the poorest 60% of schools are already three years' worth of learning behind their wealthier peers and that this gap grows as they progress through school to the extent that, by grade 9, they are five years' worth of learning behind their wealthier peers (see figure 7 on p. 35).

Previous studies have shown that the low quality of education offered to the poor eventually becomes a poverty trap.¹² Thus one can say that poor children in South Africa, who make up the majority, are starting behind and staying behind. This casts doubt on the ability of the South African schooling system to impart the knowledge, skills and values that learners need to become full members of society and to promote social mobility. Given the strong correlations between race, geography and poverty, this means that Black children in rural areas are especially disadvantaged and face few – if any – prospects for upward social mobility.

Given that learners are falling further and further behind the curriculum, it is perhaps unsurprising that many learners drop out in high school. As learners approach the external matric examination it is no longer possible to be pushed into higher grades irrespective of the knowledge and skills they have acquired. This leads to widespread drop-out in grades 10 and 11. For an overview of school attendance by age, see p. 120.

How many learners drop out of school?

There are roughly one million children in each grade up to grade 9; so, for example, there are one million children in grade 1, one million children in grade 2 and so on. However, there are only half a million learners in matric (grade 12), the rest having dropped out mainly in grades 10 and 11. In 2014, only 532,860 learners wrote matric (and 403,874 passed) even though there were 1,085,570 learners¹⁴ in the cohort that started grade 1 twelve years earlier.ⁱⁱⁱ This is one of the reasons why many South African commentators do not use the matric pass rate when discussing if the state of education is improving or deteriorating over time – because the matric class refers to only the “best” 50% of learners who remain in the schooling system. More and more policy-makers are now also beginning to recognise that the pass rate seen in isolation is problematic and, in many instances, misleading. To illustrate: of 100 learners who started school in 2003, for example, only 49 made it to matric in 2014; 37 passed; and 14 qualified to go to university. (Importantly, not all of those who qualify to go to university are accepted or enrol, and only half of those that initially enrol will eventually graduate¹⁵.) The matric pass rate is calculated by dividing the number of learners that pass matric (37 of the 100) by those that wrote matric (49 of the 100), yielding 76% in 2014. However, a more appropriate measure would be to calculate what proportion

of a cohort that started school 12 years ago, passed matric – which would be about 36% in 2014, down from 40% in 2013.

In South Africa the proportion of a cohort that will graduate from upper-secondary school (grade 12) fluctuates at around 40%. This figure is low by international standards. For example, there are much higher figures in Turkey (53%), Brazil (67%) and Chile (72%). This also explains why South Africa has comparatively few youth who reach and complete post-school education. Fewer than 10% of youths in South Africa attain 15 years of education (for example, completion of a three-year degree), compared with at least 15% in Columbia and Peru and 24% in the Philippines and Egypt.¹⁶

Given that only 40% of any given cohort of learners go on to pass matric, we can say that 60% of South Africa's youth have no educational qualifications. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is meant to provide these young people with opportunities to continue their schooling. In many countries, youth who do not complete school often have the option of studying at vocational colleges and learning practical skills to become a plumber, an electrician or a boiler-maker, for example. However, very few young people in South Africa access this kind of education and training after school, as explained in the essay on p 42.

Why do learners drop out?

It seems logical to ask not only how many learners drop out, but also *why* they drop out. Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of drop-out is the research by Martin Gustafsson,¹⁷ which explains the reasons why South African learners drop out, and in which grades they do so.

Household surveys show that when youth were asked why they dropped out of secondary school, the four most prominent reasons were: (1) lack of financing; (2) wanting to look for a job; (3) failing grades; and (4) pregnancy (for female learners).^{iv} Gustafsson highlights that the low quality of primary and lower-secondary education (grades 1 – 9) is also a clear cause of drop-out although this is perhaps not immediately obvious to youth when answering these survey questions. More recent work¹⁸ using the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) found that “not keeping pace at school is a fundamental determinant of who drops out”; and that “falling behind at school is strongly correlated with socioeconomic status and school quality in South Africa”. Grade repetition is not sufficient to address the problem, and most schools appear to be poorly equipped to help learners who have fallen behind to “negotiate a pathway to school completion.”

It is imperative, therefore, to find ways to strengthen the quality of education offered to learners, and to further understand how their socio-economic context may make it difficult for them to continue their education. In addition, it is important to focus on teenage pregnancy as a reason underlying girls' drop-out.

iii Grade 2 figures have been used as a proxy for the true size of the starting grade 1 cohort because there is excess grade repetition in grade 1, leading to an overestimate of cohort size if one uses grade 1 enrolments.

iv These reasons for school drop-out differ slightly from those listed in the Children Count section on p. 120 which focuses on a smaller cohort of children aged 7 – 17 who are not attending school. The two main research articles addressing this topic are Gustafsson (2011) (see no. 1) and Branson et al (2014) (see no. 18) in references.

Pregnancy and drop-out

In 2010, there were 480,157 female learners enrolled in grade 8, but by matric 2014 there were only 289,795 female learners. So 190,362 girls failed, dropped out or were held back between 2010 and 2014.¹⁹ NIDS shows that teen pregnancy and childbearing account for 33% of drop-out amongst female learners. This suggests that 62,819 female learners dropped out of school between 2010 and 2014 because they fell pregnant and gave birth, a figure in agreement with (but slightly lower than) estimates of the Department of Basic Education (DBE).²⁰

While teen pregnancy only accounts for a third of drop-out amongst female learners, the fact that it is so well-defined and measurable means that it might be highly actionable from a policy perspective. There need to be better advocacy campaigns directed at youth – about sex, the risks of unprotected sex, contraception, HIV, teenage pregnancy and pregnant learners' constitutional right to education.

As school completion is critical for both the young mother and her child's long-term well-being, there also needs to be tighter enforcement of policies that prevent unfair discrimination against pregnant girls (illustrated in case 2). Current (2007) measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancies are ambiguous, recommending that mothers stay out of school for up to two years after the birth. DBE is in the process of drafting a new policy that will address discrimination and emphasise learners' rights to remain in school during and after pregnancy. This is especially important as studies have indicated that young mothers indeed return to school: data from the Cape Area Panel Study (2002 – 2006) and from the African Centre Demographic Surveillance Area (2001 – 2009) indicate that about one in four (22%) teenage mothers in urban areas²¹ and one in two (58%) teenage mothers in rural areas returned to school after the birth.²² This indicates the willingness of young women to complete their education and provides an opportunity for interventions to support them.

What are the links between education and the labour market?

There is now a widespread consensus in local and international literature that education – and specifically the quality of education – plays a central role in determining which individuals get jobs and how much they earn in the labour market.²³ Expanding access to quality education is also seen as a major strategy for poverty alleviation and including previously marginalised groups:

Poverty reduction is seen as unlikely unless knowledge, skill and capabilities are extended to those who are marginalised from value-added economic activity by illiteracy, lack of numeracy, and higher level reasoning that links causes and effects rationally. In most societies, and especially those that are developing rapidly, households and individuals value participation in education and invest substantially in pursuing the benefits it can confer. The rich have few doubts that the investments pay off; the poor generally share the belief and recognise that increasingly

Case 2: Teenage pregnancy, exclusion and the law

Despite being against policy, excluding pregnant learners from school is widely practiced in South Africa, both formally and informally. In 2008 and 2009 school governing bodies at Welkom High School and Harmony High School in the Free State adopted pregnancy policies for their respective schools that allowed for the automatic exclusion of pregnant learners. In July 2013 the Constitutional Court ruled that this was unconstitutional and that pregnancy policies which exclude pregnant girls from attending class are *prima facie* a violation of pregnant learners' rights to equality, basic education, human dignity and privacy.²⁴

*mobility out of poverty is education-related, albeit that their aspirations and expectations are less frequently realised.*²⁵

Local research confirms these international findings and shows that the quality, duration and type of education an individual receives are directly related to their labour-market prospects.²⁶ Despite 20 years of democratic rule, most Black children continue to receive a low-quality education, which condemns them to the underclass of South African society where poverty and unemployment are the norm. This substandard education does not develop their capabilities or expand their economic opportunities, but instead denies them dignified employment and undermines their own sense of self-worth.

In short, poor school performance in South Africa reinforces social inequality and leads to a situation where children inherit the social position of their parents, irrespective of their motivation or ability. Low-quality education becomes a poverty trap²⁷ from which it is almost impossible to escape. What is all the more alarming is that this situation applies to the vast majority of learners.

Figure 8 on the next page visually summarises some of the local research and shows the clear links between an unequal education system and an unequal labour market. On the right of the diagram one can see two sets of cogs – each showing the interlocking relationship between socio-economic status (parental occupation, wealth and education) and the type of early childhood development, primary and secondary schooling received. The majority of learners (roughly 75 – 80%) come from poor households and do not have any exposure to quality pre-school education and therefore enter school unprepared to learn. They attend low-quality primary schools and low-quality secondary schools with high drop-out rates. These schools are characterised by wasted learning time, incomplete coverage of the curriculum,²⁸ weak subject and content knowledge among teachers,²⁹ low cognitive demands placed on learners and exceedingly poor educational outcomes.

This picture is in stark contrast to the second set of cogs in the upper part of the diagram. These show the situation for the minority of learners (roughly 20 – 25%) from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Most of these children attend at least one year of quality pre-school education and enter grade 1 mostly ready

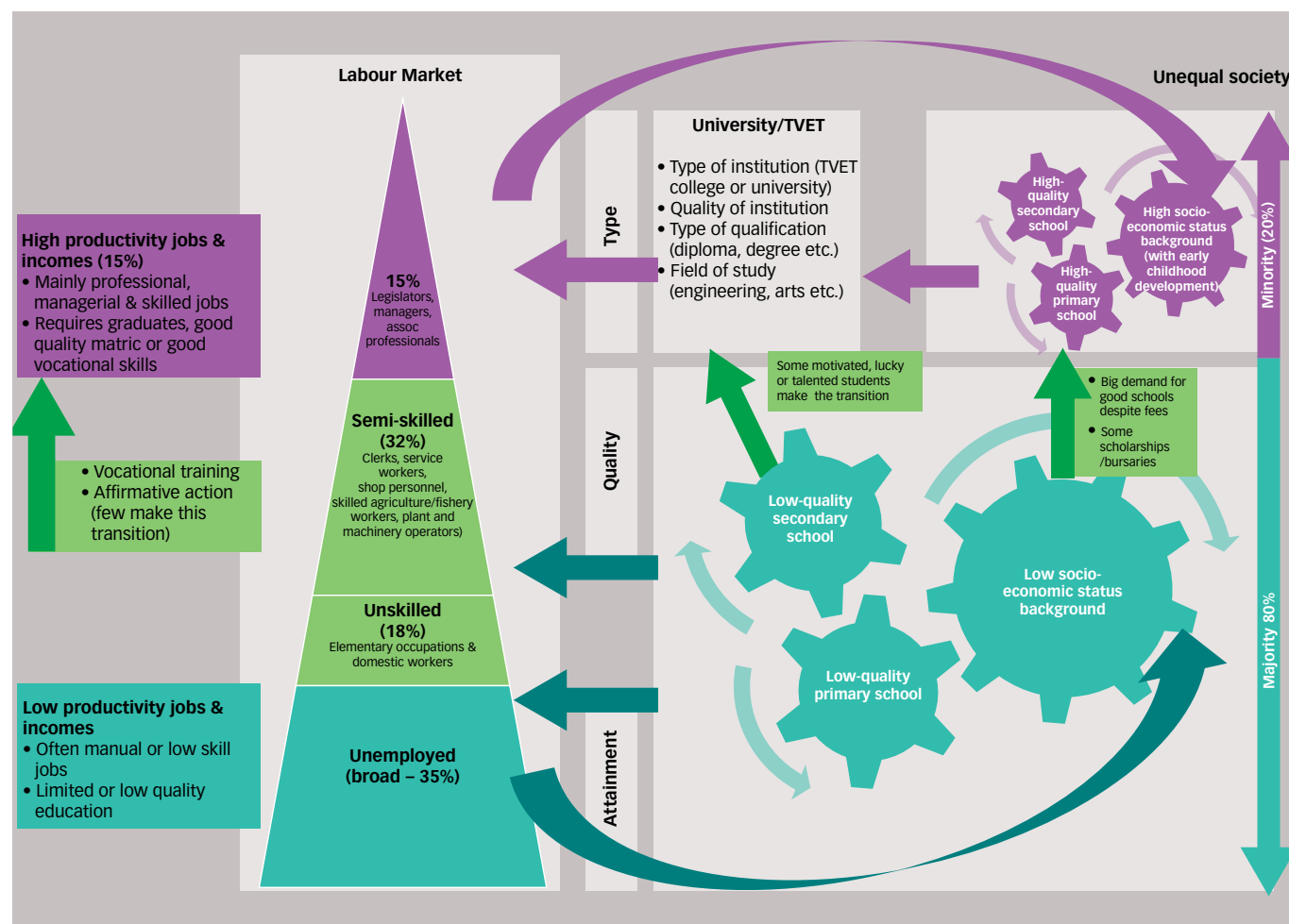
to learn. They attend functional primary and secondary schools where most children attain basic levels of performance, although still below their international peers.³⁰ Most of these learners go on to attend some form of post-school education or training and are employed in the upper part of the labour market, represented by the top triangle on the left of the diagram. The labour market (large triangle) is divided into four distinct categories, which have been calculated using the Quarterly Labour Force Survey³¹ (QLFS) of 2014 and show the state of the South African labour market:

1. More than a third (35%) of the labour force was unemployed, using the broad definition of unemployment (i.e. including those who would accept a job but have stopped looking because they are discouraged).
2. About one in five (18%) people were employed in unskilled occupations (such as elementary occupations and domestic workers).
3. A third (32%) were employed in semi-skilled jobs (such as clerks, service workers, shop personnel, skilled agricultural and fishery workers, plant and machinery operators, and so on).
4. Only 15% of those in the labour market were in highly skilled jobs (legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals, technicians and associated professionals).

The main point of figure 8 is to show how an unequal education system feeds into and perpetuates an unequal labour market. Those children who attend dysfunctional schools and do not attain any higher qualifications are the first ones to fill the ranks of the unemployed and those in low-status jobs. This is in stark contrast with the situation of wealthy children who attend functional (usually fee-charging) schools, attain higher qualifications and occupy the upper end of the labour market.

The tragedy is that these two systems continue to reproduce themselves despite the abolition of apartheid. There are still two very different and clearly differentiable education systems that are attended by the rich and the poor respectively. Although the top part of the education system and the labour market are no longer racially homogenous (White), they are largely split along class lines. Those parents who can afford to pay school fees and send their children to well-functioning government or independent schools ensure that their children can get access to the top part of the labour market. Those parents who cannot afford school fees are excluded from these schools, often in informal ways. As it currently stands the dualistic South African education system is not an engine of social mobility but rather one of the key mechanisms through which an unequal society is replicating itself.

Figure 8: The links between society, the education system and the labour market in South Africa



What new policy and programmatic options might address this situation?

There are a number of possible policy options that the DBE could explore to alleviate some of the problems identified in this essay:

- **Implement a national reading campaign.** Unless learners acquire basic numeracy and literacy skills in the foundation phase, they will battle to engage with the curriculum in higher grades and will fall further and further behind. A national reading campaign with the slogan “Every child must read fluently in the language of learning and teaching of the school (LOLT) by the end of grade 3 (age 9)” should be well advertised and articulated and must involve everyone from parents to the President. Individual reading should be assessed and monitored. Books should be made available to all learners and reading must be portrayed as an important and pleasurable activity. Similar campaigns have showed positive results in other countries, including a national goal of ensuring all children read by age eight in Brazil and the daily “literacy hour” in the United Kingdom.³²
- **Increase teacher content knowledge and teaching skill.** No education system can go beyond the competencies and quality of its teachers. Research has consistently shown that South Africa’s teachers lack the basic content knowledge and pedagogical skill to teach the subjects that they are teaching. The DBE needs to experiment with (and evaluate) different alternatives for teacher training, which is particularly important for mathematics and English – both areas where there are major deficiencies in existing teacher practice. While we ultimately need to identify promising teacher development opportunities in the medium to long term, there are short-term options available that show some promise, including highly-specified, scripted lesson plans and eye-testing to help identify additional barriers to learning among children (as illustrated in case 4 on the next page). These interventions should, however, be piloted and evaluated before being rolled out at scale.
- **Conduct a countrywide audit of district officials and curriculum advisors.** One of the major sources of professional help to teachers across the country are district-level curriculum advisors (subject specialists), yet many of these advisors have been appointed on grounds other than merit or subject expertise.³³ All curriculum advisors should be required to complete a subject-specific test and demonstrate their capacity to help teachers in their subject. The qualifications of these curriculum advisors should also be reviewed or audited since some curriculum advisors have only a matric qualification.³⁴
- **Find ways to remediate the learning “backlog” that has accumulated by the time learners reach high school.** Comprehensive, one-on-one interventions such as IkamvaYouth (see the case 3 below) have been shown to have the capacity to remediate some of the learning backlog pupils have accumulated by the time they enter the higher grades of secondary school. It is important to gather further evidence on the impact of this and similar interventions and to consider ways in which they could be scaled up.
- **Reduce drop-out caused by teenage pregnancy and childbearing.** This can be achieved by decreasing the number of unwanted teenage pregnancies, and by finding ways of accommodating and re-integrating new mothers. The first goal could be achieved by widespread campaigns on teenage pregnancy and contraception, and perhaps most importantly, by making contraception widely available to teenage girls (both in schools and clinics). Contraception and other youth-oriented health care services should be discreet, friendly and helpful. The second goal can be achieved by schools’ pro-active support for young mothers to return to school after having given birth.

Case 3: IkamvaYouth – Peer-to-peer empowerment

IkamvaYouth was established in 2003 and enables disadvantaged South African youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty through education. The innovation lies in the model: youth-driven, low cost and high impact programming which achieves academic results and post-school placements in contexts where such achievements are seldom attained. Volunteer tutors (many of whom were previous learners) deliver effective tutoring programmes through an innovative pedagogical approach. Learners drive the agenda themselves, by bringing questions and problems to small groups (IkamvaYouth aims for a tutor to learner ratio of 1:5). Tutors then facilitate peer-to-peer learning, ensuring learners explain concepts to each other, and that shy learners speak up. Tutors constantly check for understanding, and provide direct feedback on written work as learners work through examples.

They often need to go back a few grade levels to ensure that fundamentals are understood.

The IkamvaYouth learners’ matric pass rate has been between 80 – 100% since its beginnings in 2003. Over 60% of the learners have accessed tertiary education, and return to pay forward the support they received by becoming volunteer tutors themselves. Approximately 5% of township learners have a tertiary qualification, whereas a survey of IkamvaYouth alumni found that “Ikamvanites” are five times more likely than the average Black South African to hold a tertiary-level qualification. IkamvaYouth has replicated its successful model in 10 townships throughout South Africa and is currently working with over 1,400 learners.

For more information, see www.ikamvayouth.org.

Case 4: School X – The state of literacy teaching and learning

The school is situated in a village in Mpumalanga. Mrs P, founder principal since 1988, has a deliberate, understated approach to leadership. The language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in the foundation phase is English, even though the home language of most teachers and learners is siSwati, a situation which it shares with three other poor schools visited by the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) in the district.

Since discovering some 10 years ago, through referral to the local clinic, that one of the learners at School X had very poor vision, Mrs P has instituted programmes to cater for a variety of learning and physical disabilities. Of 619 learners at the school, 49 are differently abled in some or other way. The largest programme is a separate class for eight hearing-impaired children, who are taught by a tutor employed for the purpose and paid by the province. A4-size posters at key points throughout the school provide a basic sign-language vocabulary, enabling communication between participants in this programme and others in the school.

Reading levels of six of the best grade 2 pupils at the school are above those in the large majority of schools across the country ... The three best learners in one class were reading at an average of 100 words per minute and in the other at 75, both well above the median score for all 133 schools in the sample ... On a simple comprehension test, however, the results were less impressive, at a mean of 3.2 responses correct out of 5.

A reading lesson was observed in each of two grade 2 classes at the school. Both took the form of a shared reading format using Big Books. Classes contained significantly more books than were seen in most schools visited in 2012 (Kagiso readers, Bridge to English, Benny and Betty and a collection of Big Books in the library). In both lessons, discussion on the illustrations and other features of the book took far more time than was given to learners' engagement with text. Nevertheless, it seemed that at least half of the learners are able to read these simple texts, although there was much chorusing and thus difficult to say how many were actually reading.

It seemed that both teachers were able to take their learners to a basic level of literacy, but not able to launch them into independent reading and levels of textual analysis beyond simple recall. Too much time was spent on repetitive chorusing. In other words, there appeared to be an emphasis on reading as collectively decoding symbols rather than on reading for individual understanding.

The school has a large room available as a library, which contains a reasonable store of books. The library had not been open to learners since the librarian left earlier in the year, although teachers had access. The most interesting acquisition was an extensive set of Ladybird readers consisting of dozens of titles and around 300 volumes in total, none of which had been opened previously, as shown by cracking spines when evaluators did so.

Source: National Education Evaluation & Development Unit (2013) *National Report 2012: The State of Literacy Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Phase*. Pretoria: NEEDU, DBE. P. 23.

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Post-school education: Broadening alternative pathways from school to work

Nicola Branson and Clare Hofmeyr (Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town),
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Post-school education has the potential to help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by increasing young people's employability and earning potential. Yet few youth access education and training after school and even fewer successfully complete their qualification.

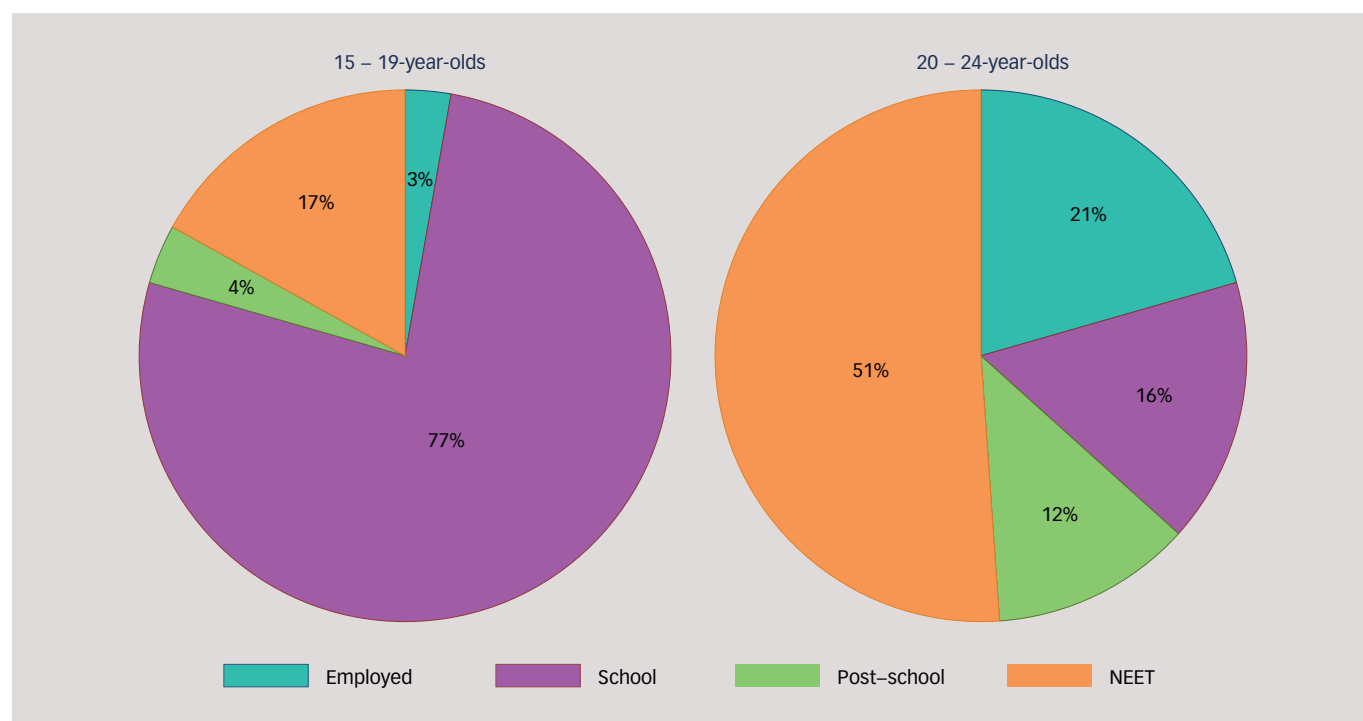
In the 2011 Census, youth aged 25 – 29 with a college qualificationⁱ are 14% more likely to be employed than those who have only completed matric, and those with a university qualification are 36% more likely to be in employment.ⁱⁱ Similarly, a college-qualified youth earns 60% more than someone with a matric and those with a university qualification earn nearly 1.5 times more.ⁱⁱⁱ Although these figures may fluctuate with the demand and supply of skills, they illustrate the benefits of studying after school.

The majority of young people in South Africa do not, however, enrol in post-school education. Only 8% of youth aged 15 – 24 are

in any type of post-school education (university or college).¹ What are they doing? Figure 9 shows that 77% of 15 – 19-year-olds are in formal schooling (many repeating grades with little chance of completing matric),² with only 4% choosing the vocational route. For 20 – 24-year-olds, 16% remain in school, 12% are in post-schooling education, 21% in employment, and 51% are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

This suggests that South Africa's youth are not being equipped with the necessary skills to successfully find employment. While it is widely recognised that improving the schooling system is critical (see essay on p. 34), an effective post-schooling education and training system can provide a range of potential pathways that enable youth to make the transition from mainstream schooling to the work force.

Figure 9: What youth are doing, Census 2011



Source: Statistics South Africa (2012) *Census 2011*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

- i Analysis of Census data where college and university qualifications were defined from highest educational attainment. NATED, National Technical Certificate (NTC) and certificates and diplomas without matric classified as college qualified, certificates and diplomas with matric and degrees classified as university qualifications.
- ii Statistics South Africa (2013) *Census 2011*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Own calculation. Regressions include a quadratic in age, a male dummy and indicators for Coloured and White (female and African are the reference categories).
- iii The Census includes income but does not specify the source of this income. We assume that for our sample of employed 25 – 29-year-olds, this income is solely from earnings. Employment takes on a value of 1 for those answering yes to the "Did the person work for a wage, salary, commission or any payment in kind?" variable. Those not working but wanting to work are assigned 0 in the employment variable.

Figure 10: National Qualification Framework

Levels	Band	Qualification type	School	ABET	NCV	NATED	OC	Providers		Q-type	
10	HET	Doctoral degree (professional)							University		
9		Masters degree (professional)									
8		Bachelor honours degree					OC 8				
		Postgraduate diploma									
7		Bachelor's degree				OC 7					
		Advanced diploma									
6		Diploma advanced certificate				OC 6				Diplomas	
5		Higher certificate			N4-N6	OC 5					
4	FET	National certificate	Grade 12 / NSC		NCV 4	N3	OC 4		TVET	Certificates	
3			Grade 11		NCV 3	N2	OC 2				
2			Grade 10		NCV 2	N1	OC 1				
1	GET	General certificate	Grade 9	Level 4				ABET centres			
			Grade 7	Level 3							
			Grade 5	Level 2							
			Grade 3	Level 1							

Notes:

GET – General Educational and Training
 ABET – Adult Basic Education and Training
 NCV – National Certificate Vocational

FET – Further Educational and Training
 TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training
 NATED – Nationally Accredited Technical Education Diploma

HET – Higher Education and Training
 NSC – National Senior Certificate
 OC – Occupational Certificate

Given this context, this essay addresses the following questions:

- What is the shape and structure of the post-school education sector?
- What obstacles do youth face in accessing and completing post-school education?
- What interventions seek to improve young people's chance of success in post-school education?
- What are the key recommendations?

What is the shape and structure of the post-school education sector?

Post-school education and training includes public and private higher education institutions (universities), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, adult education and training centres, and workplace-based education and training.³ Figure 10

illustrates how the National Qualification Framework (NQF) creates “an integrated national framework for learning achievements”⁴ across institutions. While this essay focuses on public university and college education, training is dealt with more extensively in the essay on p. 51.

Post 1994, both the college and university sector were restructured and consolidated to deal with the fragmented and racialised systems inherited from apartheid. Prior to 2004 there were 36 higher education institutions countrywide: 21 universities and 15 technikons. Universities focused on the delivery of theoretical programmes while technikons focused primarily on technical and vocational programmes. These 36 institutions merged into 23 institutions: 11 traditional universities, six universities of technology and six comprehensive universities. The comprehensive universities were formed through mergers

Box 2: Technical and vocational education and training

TVET colleges provide both NATED programmes and National Certificate Vocational (NCV) qualifications. The NCV was introduced in 2007 and there are a wide range of qualifications to choose from. These qualifications aim to respond directly to the priority skills that will help the South African economy grow. They include a theoretical and practical component in a particular vocational field. The practical experience may be offered in the workplace or in a simulated workplace environment. This has the advantage of giving students the opportunity to gain experience in the workplace during their studies. Public TVET colleges also offer NATED or “N” programmes which, when combined with practical work in a company and passing a trade test, lead to a qualification as an artisan in a wide variety of desperately-needed skills. Artisan qualifications include plumbing, welding, carpentry, boiler-making and many others.

TVET courses are aligned to the National Qualifications Framework. NCV 2 – 4 are equivalent to grades 10 – 12 respectively and correspond to NQF level 2 – 4. N1 – N3 NATED programmes have never been directly aligned with the NQF, but N3 broadly equates to grade 12/matric. N4 – N6 programmes correspond to the first year of study post grade 12 and are ranked at NQF level 5, while the National N Diploma corresponds to three years study post grade 12 at NQF level 6.

Source: Department of Higher Education and South African Qualifications Authority (2014) KHETHA Post School Guide. Pretoria: DHE & SAQA.

between universities and technikons and provide both theoretical and technical or vocational programmes. The traditional universities retained their theoretical focus and the universities of technology remain providers of primarily technical and vocational studies. Fifty public TVET colleges were created in 2002 by amalgamating former technical colleges, training centres and colleges of education.⁵

Institutions vary by type of programme offered, entrance requirements and tuition cost. Degrees can only be attained from universities (traditional, comprehensive or university of technology), while diplomas and certificates are attained from universities and colleges (figure 10 on the previous page). Traditional universities have the most stringent entrance requirements, requiring a completed grade 12 with university endorsement (a bachelor’s pass), specific subjects depending on programme chosen, and, in most cases, a pass on an internal entrance examination (national benchmark test). TVET colleges, on the other hand, are the most accessible. Learners who have completed grade 9 are eligible for certain courses, while those with grade 12 (with or without endorsement) can access courses without the need to have taken specific subjects or achieved certain marks (see box 2). Universities of technology and comprehensive universities fall somewhere in-between as their entrance requirements for degree qualification

are similar to traditional universities but access to diploma or certificate qualifications is less restrictive.⁶

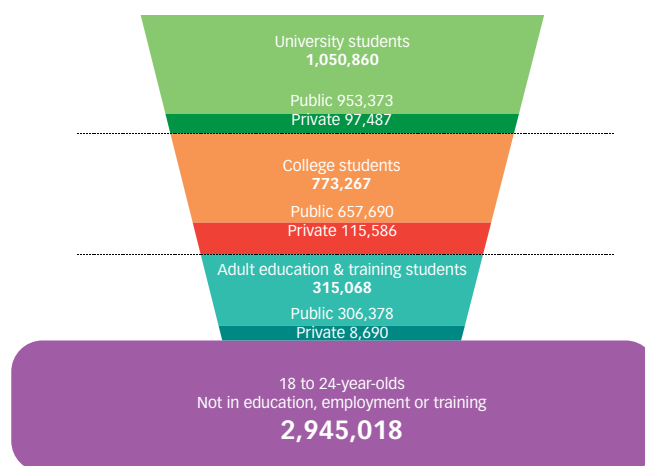
Post-schooling tuition costs are substantial and would be out of reach for many without the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Student fees for government-subsidised college programmes range from around R5,000 to R16,000 per annum, with unsubsidised programmes around R30,000 per annum.⁷ University tuition fees, on the other hand, can be as high as R46,000.⁸

In this context, the mismatch between current enrolment in universities and colleges and the school-leaving population is marked.⁹ Even though 64% of school leavers do not pass matric, figure 11 shows that enrolments at universities are above those in college and most youth are not in education, employment or training.

Racial inequalities persist among those youth who are enrolled in post-school education. Figure 12 illustrates how Africans and Coloureds are under-represented in all post-school institutions, and particularly in universities and postgraduate studies.¹⁰ Differences in enrolment between men and women are less marked,¹¹ yet universities struggle to retain women in postgraduate studies¹² as illustrated in figure 13.¹³

There is a clear policy drive to change both the size and the shape of the sector and to improve the range and quality of qualifications on offer,¹⁴ with a target of 2.5 million students in TVET and 1.6 million students in universities by 2030.¹⁵ The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has commissioned 12 new TVET campuses to increase the capacity of the TVET sector and to enable rural access in particular. In addition, there are plans to improve capacity, quality and the relevance of TVET programmes.¹⁶ High drop-out,¹⁷ low doctoral production rates and the persistent under-representation of Africans and women in postgraduate qualifications¹⁸ are areas for focus in the university sector.

Figure 11: The South African post-school system, 2012



Source: Van Schalkwyk F & Sheppard C (2014) Shape of the South African Post-school System 2010 versus 2012. Viewed 13 September 2015: http://figshare.com/articles/Shape_of_the_South_African_Post_school_System_2010_versus_2012/1160503.

Data sources: Higher Education Management Information System and Further Education and Training Management Information System. Calculations by Charles Sheppard for the Centre of Higher Education Transformation.

Note: The enrolment numbers in this figure are not restricted to under 25s, only the NEET group is restricted.

What obstacles do youth face in accessing and completing post-school education?

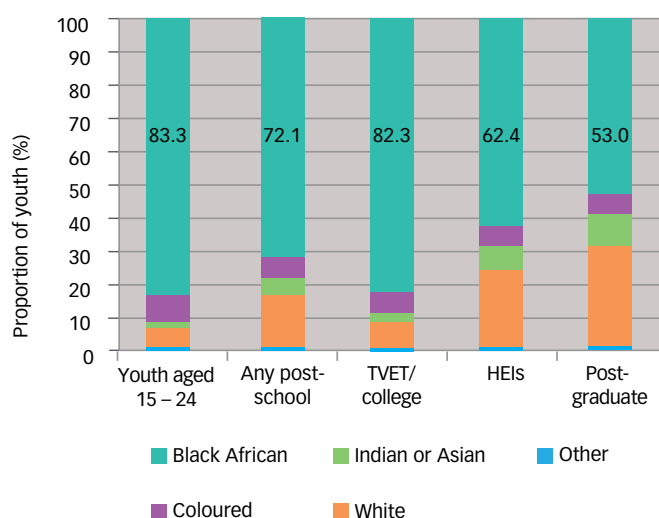
The potential benefits of post-school education provide strong motivation for youth to continue their studies after leaving school and research shows that many youth have high aspirations to study further.¹⁹ Yet few of South Africa's youth successfully access and complete a post-school qualification. This section examines some of the obstacles they face.

Lack of school-to-post-school guidance

Learners face a number of important decision-making moments during their educational career. Yet their choices are often constrained. Matric subjects are chosen in grade 9, when employment and careers are far from a reality, and choices may be compounded by poor guidance around subject choice and future possibilities.²⁰ School career-guidance programmes are not comprehensive, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged schools,²¹ and many parents have no first-hand knowledge of studying after school²². Add to this the weak link between grade progression and actual ability in many schools²³ and the lack of externally marked standardised tests prior to the matric exam, all of which make it difficult for students to form realistic expectations of their ability and to plan for their future.

It is also not clear how learners navigate the post-schooling application process. Some studies have shown that learners base their decisions on their perceptions of institutions²⁴, a desire for white-collar rather than blue-collar jobs²⁵, and the experiences of respected members in their communities²⁶. Colleges are often stereotyped as "second-rate" institutions.²⁷ In group discussions with grade 12 learners in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, it became clear that TVET colleges were viewed as a low status, easy alternative to finishing secondary school.²⁸ A history of neglect of technical or vocational education and perceptions that such

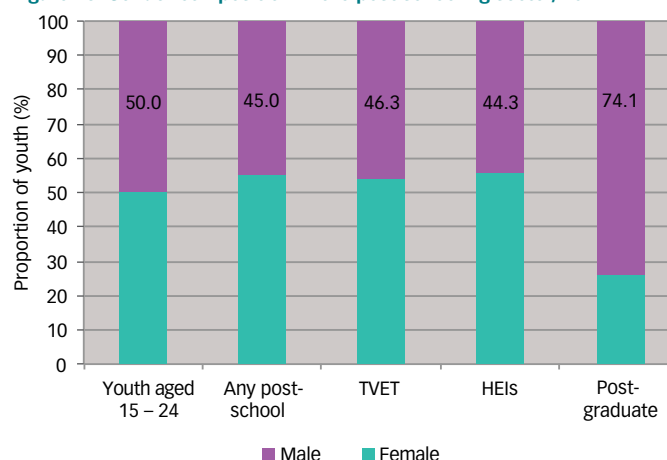
Figure 12: Racial composition in the post-schooling sector, 2011



Source: Statistics South Africa (2012) *Census 2011*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

Note: Postgraduate population restricted to individuals who have completed at minimum a bachelors degree.

Figure 13: Gender composition in the post-schooling sector, 2011



Source: Statistics South Africa (2012) *Census 2011*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

colleges are for those who do not succeed academically are likely to have contributed to this reputation, as well as the low-status and poor working conditions associated with menial and artisanal work in South Africa.²⁹

The post-schooling application process is cumbersome. Currently, each institution has its own application requirements and deadlines. Application forms can be lengthy and complex to fill out and financial aid applications require additional forms and supporting documentation that may not be readily available (such as parents' payslips). Many institutions want applications to be submitted online and charge an application fee, which makes multiple applications costly.³⁰

These factors make it hard for young people to access appropriate post-school programmes.

Financial constraints

The cost of attending post-school education is substantial and includes not only tuition fees, but application fees, fees for the national benchmark test, textbooks, transport costs, accommodation and other living expenses. Families go to extraordinary lengths to help finance further education, but often need additional support.³¹ The NSFAS is well established and provides low-income learners with loans on favourable terms based on a financial means test and academic promise.

Yet the demand far exceeds the funding available. Although government's contribution increased 10-fold between 1996 and 2011, many learners still do not receive funding and others receive funding that does not sufficiently cover living expenses.³² University fees have also increased rapidly over the past two decades,³³ leading to an increase in the number of students who fall above the NSFAS threshold but cannot afford fees. While programmes like EduLoan assist in the payment of fees, conditions for repayment are fairly stringent.³⁴ Academically strong students can apply for university-specific funding, but these funds are often linked to alumni and therefore more limited in historically disadvantaged universities.³⁵

Financial constraints in TVET colleges are less binding than those in the university sector.³⁶ Government presently subsidises 80% of the cost of official college programmes and NSFAS loans and bursaries are available to cover the remaining 20% that students are required to pay. The increased enrolments in TVET appear to be directly related to NSFAS bursary allocations: in 2010, R318 million was allocated to 61,703 students (of a total of around 400,000 students), but by 2014 a staggering R2.107 billion was allocated to 233,958 students (out of a total of around 700,000 students).³⁷

Staying the course

Drop-out rates are high. Tracking a 2006 cohort of university entrants, it was found that “only 35% of the total intake, and 48% of contact students, graduate within five years” and that 55% will never graduate.³⁸ Patterns appear even worse in colleges with an average pass rate for the National Certificate Vocational of 42%.³⁹ However, close to half who register to write the examination do not write.⁴⁰

Academic preparedness, curriculum structure and content

Academic preparedness is an issue at both universities and colleges. Increases in the matric pass rate in recent years have resulted in more people applying to university.⁴¹ Universities have introduced supplementary screening measures such as the National Benchmark Tests to address concerns over grade inflation. Yet drop-out in first year remains substantial⁴² and studies show that many students are overwhelmed by the quantity and level of material covered.⁴³ Academic development programmes are in place in universities to extend the learning time and provide additional support to ease the transition, but are not enough to improve graduation rates.⁴⁴ A recent Council of Higher Education discussion document calls for the “extended programme” to be incorporated as mainstream, given that the majority of learners entering the system are underprepared.⁴⁵

There is also concern that university curricula are outdated and not flexible enough “to deal constructively with diversity in students’ educational, linguistic and socio-economic background”.⁴⁶ Finally, although few students continue beyond undergraduate studies, universities are still primarily seen as producers of knowledge and research⁴⁷ and curricula are designed to further this aim. While the distinction between the three types of universities – traditional, comprehensive and university of technology – has tried to address this through differentiated programmes,⁴⁸ many problems remain, which can lead to students feeling disillusioned with their choice of study.

In the college sector, the introduction of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) syllabus proved to be more academically challenging than the National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) courses and resulted in high subject failure rates and low certification rates (around 10% nationally in 2007⁴⁹). Evaluations have shown that the NCV curriculum for fundamentals such as mathematics and English might be tougher than the equivalent grades 10 – 12 material in mainstream schools.⁵⁰ Given that it was initially targeted at grade 9 learners, many of whom

were performing poorly in the formal schooling system, this led to calls for revision of the qualification. Students were found to lack academic reading and writing skills, mathematical skills and have difficulties with the language of instruction. Many colleges therefore established stricter entrance requirements, for instance selecting grade 11 or 12 applicants. Yet this undermines one of the primary purposes of the NCV: to provide an alternative pathway for youth to complete school. The NATED programmes’ outdated course material and requirement to complete work placements, which are in short supply, have been major barriers to the programmes’ success.⁵¹

Institutional environment

Students’ feeling of involvement, integration and community in their institution is important for staying the course.⁵² Since 2007, TVET colleges have invested, at considerable expense, in student support systems such as selection and recruitment mechanisms, academic support programmes and libraries. Resource centres that students can access after hours are needed to help students who do not have computer and internet facilities at home. Classroom challenges include student discipline and motivation, large age ranges and large classes.⁵³

A committee set up by higher education bodies noted an “institutional culture that remains white and the pervasive racism that it engenders”, as well as the “disjuncture between institutional policies and the real-life experiences of staff and students” that created “immense unhappiness and frustration amongst black staff across institutions”.⁵⁴ Staff reported feeling “disenchantment, alienation and anger” as “they did not feel at home in the institution”. Students experience similar frustration and disillusionment and are known to underperform in a learning environment that is not culturally responsive.⁵⁵ Initiatives such as the “Rhodes Must Fall” movement at the University of Cape Town provide clear evidence of this frustration.

Articulation between college and university sectors

The NQF aims to promote articulation between different qualifications, yet this has not materialised. It remains difficult for students to navigate between different educational levels, programmes and qualification types. For example, universities of technology have struggled to obtain recognition for their qualifications by traditional universities.⁵⁶ In addition, post-schooling qualifications fall under three separate frameworks namely: the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework under the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations; the General and Further Education Qualifications Sub-Framework under Umalusi; and the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework, each with different entrance and access requirements.⁵⁷

In 2009, a government gazette was issued which allows college students with NCV qualifications to enter into universities, albeit with higher pass marks than matric students.⁵⁸ More recently, comprehensive universities such as the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and the University of Johannesburg have developed detailed entrance criteria for NCV graduates, which should enable access to their respective universities.⁵⁹

What interventions seek to improve young people's chance of success in post-school education?

The previous section highlighted how students struggle to find, fund and complete post-school education. Here we highlight some of the current interventions that seek to overcome the obstacles they face.

Finding the appropriate post-school option

There are numerous websites⁶⁰ that provide information on post-school education and employment options for school-leavers. The National Career Development Services has recently established a campaign, "KHETHA – Make the right choice. Decide on your future." The information provided is comprehensive, clearly presented and addresses aspects from subject choice to funding procedures.⁶¹ Provision is however primarily via their website^{iv} and through booklets distributed to a subset of schools.

Establishing a central applications service is seen as a crucial part of government's plans for the post-school education and training sector.⁶² A central application clearing house began operating in 2014 and redirects students who are not accepted at one university to other universities.⁶³ Once more firmly established in the university sector, it will be expanded to TVET colleges. Commitment to the start of the central application service is yet to be made.

Government has also been vocal about the need to get employers involved in the training of a future workforce by offering placements to TVET college students.⁶⁴ Some colleges have set up student support units and already have strong links with employers, but these initiatives need to be taken to scale, especially in rural areas. Professional, Vocational, Technical and Academic Learning (Pivotal) grants have been set up to assist in this process.⁶⁵

Financing a chosen programme

A recent study on the impact of the NSFAS loans⁶⁶ found that students who received NSFAS funding were less likely to drop out and more likely to qualify than those who did not. This indicates that relieving the financial costs of studying can improve students' ability to remain at university and graduate. Difficulties in the allocation of NSFAS funds further highlight the importance of credit constraints in youth's ability to continue post-school education. When the NSFAS programme was initiated, institutions – confronted with limited funds and a huge pool of eligible NSFAS applicants – simply divided funding equally among applicants with no regard to the full cost of study.⁶⁷ This resulted in many learners dropping out as they struggled to afford to continue.⁶⁸

Relieving the financial burden of post-school education is viewed by the government as a key mechanism to deracialise further education (and thereby also the top end of the labour market). For this reason allocations to the NSFAS were increased over 10-fold in the past 20 years. The NSFAS has also recognised the importance of covering the full cost of study.⁶⁹ In the college sector, the NSFAS

covers travel expenses and most colleges have residences. In addition, the various Skills Education Training Authorities (SETAs) now provide stipends for students to complete the workplace requirements for their qualifications. However, shortages of funds and gaps between funding and the full cost of study remain and are particularly problematic in historically disadvantaged universities where more students need funding and where internal resources to top up funds are limited.⁷⁰ In addition to the general NSFAS loans and bursaries, there are other sources of public funding directed towards specific programmes such as the Funza Lushaka bursary for those studying to become teachers.

Finally, the NSFAS has plans to make it easier for prospective students to apply. For example, those coming from disadvantaged schools will have automatic eligibility for NSFAS funding, and prospective students will be able to apply directly to NSFAS rather than going through individual institutions.⁷¹ A pilot is being conducted in 2015, with applications being submitted directly to NSFAS for a subset of universities.

Graduation

A wide range of programmes exist to support students in the transition from schooling to post-school education, and on to graduation. These programmes take many different forms, offering some combination of information, mentoring, a chance to rewrite matric and academic support. There is no clear evidence yet around which type of intervention is most effective but there appears to be a move towards more comprehensive programmes (see box 3 on p. 48 for a small selection of examples).

Recognising that both the NCV and NATED programmes provide valuable qualification alternatives, the NATED programmes have been retained. As part of the DHET's implementation of a turnaround strategy for the TVET college sector, both the NCV and NATED programmes have been reviewed, and administrative weaknesses are being addressed by instituting minimum attendance criteria and reviewing funding norms.

In 2014, the DHET commissioned the Ministerial Committee on Articulation Policy, and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) released its Policy on Credit Accumulation and Transfer. Both seek to address the current lack of articulation between qualifications and to develop cohesive and integrated education and training, learning and career pathways.

What are the key recommendations?

The analysis has highlighted that government is on track in terms of policy in many spheres, but implementation is slow and needs to be improved. Based on the analysis in this essay, we recommend the following:

Improve career guidance in schools

Life orientation is a compulsory matric subject, which, amongst other things, aims to prepare learners to "make informed decisions about subject choices, careers, and additional and higher education

iv Only 44.6% of youth have access to an internet connection in their household, library, community hall, Thusong Centre, at school/university/college, place of work or via their mobile phone (GHS 2013, own calculations). This varies across the provinces; 63% of Gauteng youth have internet access but only 26% of Limpopo youth.

opportunities”.⁷² There is much room for improvement including the provision of consistent and comprehensive information, the creation of realistic expectations and a more positive perception of TVET colleges. Material from campaigns such as KHETHA should be incorporated into the school syllabus.

Assess the impact of a central application system

Limited understanding or certainty regarding final grade 12 marks suggests that the optimal application strategy for a grade 12 learner would be to apply to multiple institutions with differing entrance requirements. Yet the application costs preclude this. Implementing the envisaged centralised application system could assist in the allocation of learners to appropriate institutions yet there are potentially negative consequences. Rigorous evaluation of the benefits, unintended costs (such as bureaucratic inefficiencies) and minimum functioning requirements (such as assistance with filling out forms) of such a system, prior to implementation, would be beneficial.

Improve the functioning of the NSFAS

Late payments to students and fraudulent claims for accommodation and travel allowances still plague the NSFAS.⁷³ The scheme is in the process of simplifying the application process and preventing the misallocation of funds. These efforts must be continued, implemented and sustained.

Different options within the college sector

The NCV syllabus appears poorly matched to learners leaving school in grade 9 or 10 due to academic difficulties. While the retention of the NATED courses provides some scope for this group, broadening

the range of qualifications available in the college sector to provide a viable option for those failing the mainstream is important. The community college concept would appear to fill a much-needed gap and relieve some of the pressure on TVET colleges.

Support for programmes that are academically less challenging but generate self-employment needs to be investigated. For example, programmes such as hairdressing provide a useful and decent self-employment opportunity but are currently expensive and receive no subsidisation from the state.

Improve articulation between college and university sectors

Poor articulation between the NCV and university curricula limits the ability of TVET students to progress to higher education. Even if only a few desire this route, improving articulation and creating stronger links between universities and colleges would encourage learners to use college as a stepping-stone to higher education rather than giving up on the possibility of further studies.

Provide comprehensive student support

Universities need to be encouraged to develop comprehensive support systems for individual programmes of study – from initial application and enrolment through to job placement – and should include recipients in this process to give them a sense of ownership of their educational success (see box 3 for examples).

Address the gaps in current knowledge

There are a number of areas in the post-schooling sector where there is a need for additional research and data, including:

- There are very few systematic and rigorous evaluations of education policies and programmes currently in place. Without

Box 3: Examples of student support interventions

Provision of information: There are numerous websites that provide information on post-school education and employment options for school-leavers including the National Career Development Services (KHETHA), Career Planet, The Skills Portal and MaxMatric. While useful, information in this format will only reach youth with access to the internet.

Rewriting matric: Since 2011, the National Youth Development Agency has offered recently-failed matriculants a chance to re-write their exams. The programme is free and provides tuition, study guides, career guidance and three assessments per subject, as well as registration for the National Senior Certificate. While the programme has achieved good pass rates, its reach remains very limited, with a target of 4,500 learners in 2015.

Access for promising youth from disadvantaged areas: A number of institutions have programmes that identify and mentor promising learners from disadvantaged secondary schools in order to provide access to their courses, such as Go to University to Succeed at the University of the

Witwatersrand and 100UP at the University of Cape Town. Stand-alone organisations also operate in this area, such as the Rural Education Access Programme. Yet the success of these programmes depends in large part on the subsequent support once the student has enrolled.

Academic support programmes: Most universities offer at least one academic support programme per faculty although this is not standardised within or across institutions. These programmes typically extend the qualification by a year and provide additional academic support in the first year of study. There is limited analysis of the efficacy of these programmes. A programme in the commerce faculty at the University of Cape Town was found to improve first-year pass rates, but had no impact on final graduation rates.⁷⁴

Mentoring: The introduction of programmes such as MOT (from the Danish for “show courage”) in some TVET colleges has made a difference in student attitudes to learning, confidence and self-esteem,⁷⁵ and has complemented individual college academic support initiatives.

this information it is impossible to determine reliably which are the most effective at improving post-schooling outcomes and accordingly where to direct resources.

- There is a severe lack of publicly available administrative data on the TVET system. Data collected by individual colleges are

not collated and made available to researchers. Disaggregation of the data in meaningful ways would help shed light on even the most basic statistics, such as ascertaining the number of TVET students with a matric.

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Youth unemployment in South Africa: Understanding the challenge and working on solutions

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The high levels of unemployment in South Africa are a key concern for young people after leaving school. The challenges in the schooling and post-secondary education systems discussed in previous essays especially contribute to high levels of youth unemployment. But it is also important to consider how the structure of the labour market as well as personal, household and community factors impact on the ability of young peopleⁱ to access employment. Additionally, in considering interventions that could bring about change, it is important to acknowledge young people's agency and survival strategies. This chapter will provide an overview of these factors and explore the following questions:

- How big is the youth unemployment problem?
- Who is most affected?
- What labour market features limit young people's access to work?
- How do community, household and personal factors limit young people's access to work?
- What are the personal effects of unemployment?
- What interventions could enhance youth's access to the labour market?
- What are some of the possible ways to address youth unemployment in South Africa?

The essay takes a broad view of employment, acknowledging that young people may find work in the formal or informal sector, or in other forms of vulnerable employment (such as short-term and casual labour).ⁱ We focus primarily on interventions aimed at addressing unemployment, but also look at ways that can enable young people to progress to better, more stable forms of employment.

How big is the youth unemployment problem?

In the first quarter of 2015, the official youth unemployment rateⁱⁱ was 37% for youth between the ages of 15 and 34 years (which equates to approximately 3,646,000 young people).² This rate has increased from 33% in 2008. One major contributing factor is that the absorptionⁱⁱⁱ rate of youth into the labour market has declined over this period (from 36% to 33%). The data also show that there has been an increase in discouraged work-seekers

(from 4% to 8%) – in other words, more young people have given up looking for work over this period. When these young people are included, the expanded youth unemployment rate goes up to approximately 45%.³ This suggests that despite policy discussions and interventions, the situation for young people has worsened over the past seven years.

Who is most affected?

The broad definition of youth masks the differences in transitions to work at different ages. For instance 15 – 19-year-olds have much lower labour force participation rates (92% are not economically active) as the majority are still in education. As young people get older and move into the labour force, they are most likely to struggle with employment in their early 20s. The expanded unemployment rate^{iv} for 20 – 24-year-olds is 61%, going down to 42% for 25 – 29-year-olds and 33% for 30 – 34-year-olds.⁴

Young women are more vulnerable to unemployment than young men (see figure 14 on the next page), and there are significant differences in unemployment rates by province.

African and Coloured youth are far more vulnerable to unemployment than their White or Indian counterparts. Just over 40% of African youth and 32% of Coloured youth are unemployed, compared to 23% of Indian and 11% of White youth.⁵ A range of reasons explain these differences, including the inequalities in the schooling system (discussed in the essay on p. 34).

What labour market features limit young people's access to work?

Young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment in South Africa because demand for labour is highest for skilled employees. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the country's economic policy shifted to a high productivity, technology-led growth path that was intended to stimulate investment in skills development and higher wages. This happened at the same time as an increase in the still largely unskilled labour force and a shift away from labour-intensive agriculture.⁶ The result has been a drop in the employment of unskilled labour and minimal growth in sectors that were intended to drive the growth path.⁷ Higher skilled labour is needed to drive technological development, and labour market absorption rates are therefore highest among those

i In this essay, we consider an expanded definition of youth (as aged 15 – 34) in order to track changes in labour market participation as young people age towards adulthood. This expanded definition corresponds to the one in the new National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020.

ii The official unemployment rate reflects three criteria that must be met: the person must be without work, available to work, and actively seeking work.

iii Labour market absorption is a measure of the proportion of working-age adults that are employed.

iv Including discouraged work-seekers.

with post-secondary qualifications.⁸ While the youth (15 – 34 years) unemployment rate for those with less than a matric qualification is 55%, for those with a tertiary qualification (certificate, diploma or degree) it is only 8%.⁹ Graduate unemployment rates are therefore not the main area of concern.

This demand for higher-skilled labour stands in strong contrast to the reality of the majority of young people in South Africa. Many enter the labour force with minimal skills due to the failures of the basic and post-secondary education systems (see the essays on p. 34 and p. 42). In addition, employers are demanding higher benchmarks (such as a matric certificate) even for unskilled positions and apply additional selection criteria such as references from current employees and previous work experience.¹⁰ The resultant skills mismatch and young people's premature entry into the labour market (without matric or higher education and without the necessary degree of work readiness) are key drivers of youth unemployment. This essay therefore focuses on this large group of young people who enter the labour market with minimal skills (see figure 8 on p. 38) and thus have to compete with a large pool of other unskilled job-seekers¹¹ or with older workers who have more work experience.

How do community, household and personal factors limit young people's access to work?

Apart from the labour market structure, it is also necessary to consider community, household and personal factors that drive youth unemployment. Many of these can be attributed to the legacy of apartheid, but are also the result of post-apartheid policies and planning. For instance, one community-level factor that drives unemployment is the high cost of transport to seek work. This factor is a consequence of both apartheid and post-apartheid urban planning that keeps the majority of poor and low skilled people trapped in areas far away from job opportunities,

making it particularly difficult for African and Coloured young people to seek work.

Community and household level factors also hinder access to information for the majority of poor youth. Many are, for example, unable to afford internet café fees to search for job opportunities or information on post-secondary education. Further, unlike middle-class youth, they lack "productive social capital" – social networks that can be used for information about and access to the labour market – which is an important asset for navigating entry into the labour market.¹²

Young people, and particularly young women, who have to take on care responsibilities within the household, are further limited in their opportunities to participate in the labour force.¹³

At the personal level, qualitative evidence suggests that young people are engaging in a range of work-seeking activities,¹⁴ but, in addition to their lack of access to information about how best to apply for jobs, may have unrealistic expectations of what kinds of jobs they are qualified for and what wages they should be earning.¹⁵

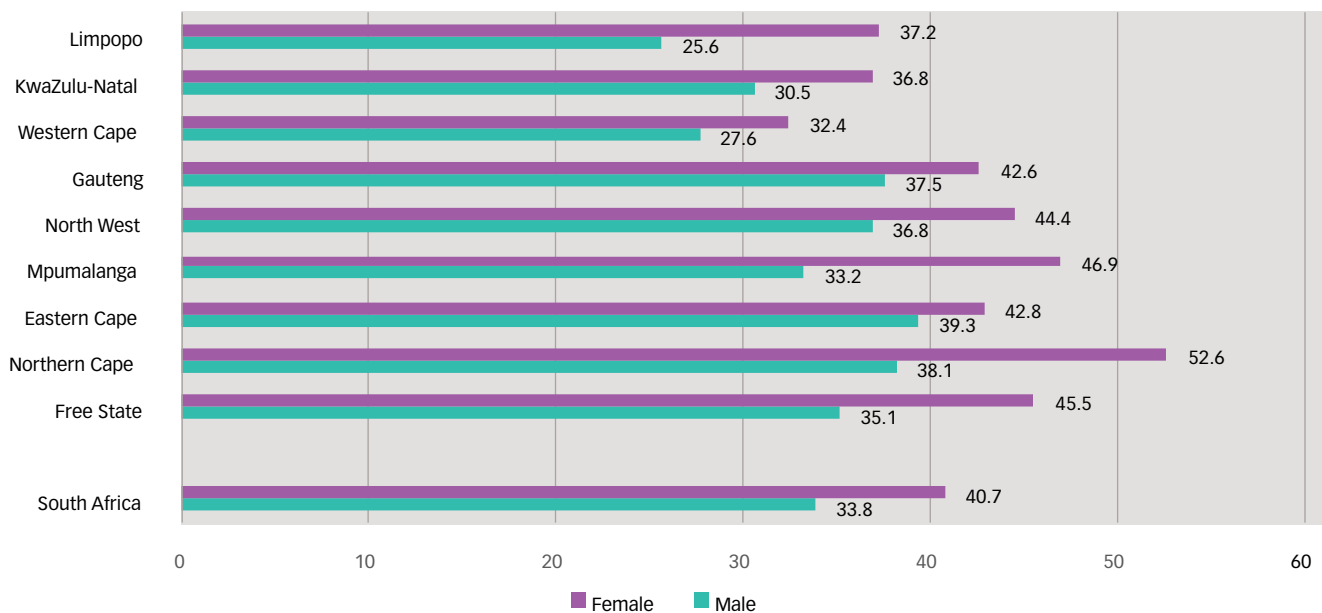
Youth also engage in various other strategies to attempt to make some kind of livelihood, including starting a small business and pooling small amounts of money to purchase items that they can sell:

This week toilet paper was on sale at the market. My friend and I bought loads of toilet paper and now people can come and buy one roll for R2.00 at my shack. Sometimes it's eggs or sweets. (Rasta, 26-year-old, Gauteng)¹⁶

Others take advantage of seasonal peaks to earn some money:

When it is the festival [Grahamstown Arts Festival] we can get jobs at the shops or stalls for a short time but we always know it's only for two weeks. Then we are back to where we started. (Beauty, 24-year-old, Eastern Cape)¹⁷

Figure 14: Unemployment rate (excluding discouraged work-seekers) of youth aged 15 – 34 years, by province and gender



Source: Statistics South Africa (2015) *National and Provincial Labour Market: Youth Q1: 2008–Q1: 2015*. Statistical release P0211.4.2. Pretoria: Stats SA.

Box 4: NEET – Youth not in any kind of employment, education or training

Of the almost 10.2 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years, 33% are what might be considered a particularly vulnerable group. They are the young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and who are therefore considered as “neither improving their future employability through investment in skills nor gaining experience through employment.”¹⁸ They are arguably the most vulnerable to chronic unemployment and poverty as well as social exclusion.

The proportions of youth NEETs are still low for 15 – 17-year-olds, many of whom are still at secondary school, but rise quite dramatically for 18 – 25-year-olds, peaking at 51% for 21 – 25-year-olds. Thereafter the proportion of NEETs declines somewhat and for 30 – 34-year-olds the rate is 42%. This suggests that over time some young people are finding their way into employment, despite little training and experience. However a 42% NEET rate for 30 – 34-year-olds is still alarmingly high.¹⁹

As can be expected – youth with less education are more likely to be NEET.²⁰ For example, 58% of young people aged 21 – 25 who have not completed secondary education are NEET, while for those with some post-secondary education only 36% are NEET.²¹

In the same way that young women are more vulnerable to unemployment than young men, they are also more likely to

be both unemployed and not in education or training: 36% of young women 15 – 24-years-old are NEET, compared to only 30% of young men.²²

The high proportion of young people not in employment, education or training stems from many reasons as outlined in the essays on p. 34 and p. 42:

- Many young people are not completing matric and cannot easily access second chances to complete their schooling.
- There are limited places at universities and technical vocational education and training colleges.²³
- A lack of finance and information makes it difficult to access post-secondary education opportunities.

Given that the South African labour market has higher demand for skilled labour, engaging in some form of skills development and training is an important mechanism for improving young people’s chances of securing employment. It is therefore a serious concern that so many young people are not in environments in which they can enhance their skills and experience – either through the workplace or through training institutions. The above statistics point to the need for interventions to support young people to transition to some form of post-secondary education or training or workplace experience.

In an informal settlement in Tembisa on Gauteng’s East Rand, a youth leader shares how the local youth club tries to help young people find work:

Each week we [the leadership of the youth club] put whatever money we have together to buy the paper with the jobs advertised. We look through and highlight the ones that many young people could apply for. Young people in the community ... come to us and we help them with their CVs and applications. (Siphiwe, 27-year-old, Gauteng)²⁴

These examples show young people’s willingness to look for work or self-employment,²⁵ and provide opportunities for interventions. However, constant job searches with little success take a heavy toll on the overall well-being of youth:

I have taken my CV to many shops in the area. It’s useless. They always say “we’ll get back to you”. But they never do. If you don’t know someone there they won’t take you. (Letty, 25-year-old, Eastern Cape)²⁶

I don’t even try any more. I took my CV to so many places and nobody ever calls you back. It’s a waste of my time and money. (Thando, 28-year-old, Gauteng)²⁷

What are the personal effects of unemployment?

Unemployment may increase risk behaviour. Some young people may engage in unprotected sex in an attempt to survive. This includes engaging in transactional sex,²⁸ and staying with partners who are engaging in unprotected sex with others but who provide limited financial stability²⁹. These and other health-related issues are discussed further in the essay on p. 60.

Long-term unemployment and negative labour market experiences lead to decreased self-esteem, depression and discouragement, which, in turn, have negative effects on the likelihood of an employer hiring youth.³⁰ These negative consequences of long-term unemployment are well documented elsewhere in the world.³¹ Amongst Swedish youth, for instance, unemployment was associated with nervous complaints and depressive symptoms, even after controlling for initial psychological health and background factors.³² In Australia, youth unemployment was found to be strongly associated with suicide, depression and loss of confidence.³³ In South Africa, the cycle of mental ill-health, unemployment and poverty has been explored³⁴ but requires further research as this link with depression might, among other things, hamper young people’s access to interventions that aim to connect them to the labour market.^v

v Preliminary research on the topic is taking place at the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit at the University of Cape Town.

Youth unemployment and the cycle of poverty

In South Africa the transition from school to work is not a smooth one, and for most youth it is characterised by a period of unemployment that can stretch to a number of years.³⁵ Youth who do not possess labour market-related qualifications are particularly affected by this interrupted transition, a factor that continues to entrench disadvantage. One way to mitigate negative outcomes might be to encourage early labour market experience through work while at school. International and South African evidence indicates that high school graduates who have worked while at school experience lower unemployment and obtain better quality jobs than their counterparts.³⁶ This implies that the manner in which the transition from schooling to work is negotiated has long-lasting implications. Long periods of unemployment between leaving school and entering the labour market affect prospective employers' views of the perceived productivity of an individual. Thus, individuals who have been unemployed for much of their youth may remain unemployed for much of their post-youth lives.³⁷

In addition, failure to complete any post-secondary education or training affects later productivity. The forgone earnings and lack of skills may make it difficult to escape poverty. The benefits of schooling on earnings, recognised worldwide as the average return per year of schooling (in terms of increased earnings), were reported to be 7.3% for men and 9.8% for women in 2007.³⁸

These challenges tend to reinforce the inequality gap between advantaged and disadvantaged youth in South Africa. Youth from middle- and upper-class households are likely to navigate fairly structured pathways from school through higher or further education to employment.³⁹ Further, they benefit from access to better education, financial resources, cultural and social capital that they can leverage for information about, and access to, the labour market. Youth from poorer households, however, face uncertainty as they exit the education and social grant systems. Inadequate access to social and financial assets and a lack of relevant skills, support systems, work experience and employment opportunities make it particularly difficult for poor youth to navigate the transition from school to work, which in turn increases the risk for chronic unemployment and poverty for both young people themselves, and their children.

What interventions can enhance youth's access to the labour market?

Government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played a significant role in developing policies, programmes and interventions to address the challenge of youth unemployment. However, major changes can only be expected once labour markets are able to absorb more unskilled labour, or the education system produces job-seekers with the required skills set. In the meantime, however, measures can be put into place to support the efforts of young people seeking employment.

Policy framework

The Youth Employment Accord⁴⁰ identifies a number of strategies to enhance youth economic participation. These include: increasing youth employment targets; enhancing public employment schemes such as the National Youth Service, the Expanded Public Works Programme and the Community-Based Public Works Programme; supporting youth entrepreneurship and cooperative development; creating mechanisms for young people to be exposed to work; and enhancing skills development.⁴¹ In addition, the new National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020 (adopted in May 2015) suggests identifying and supporting sectors with the highest potential to absorb youth; and better preparing young people with the skills required in the workplace whilst they are still in education.⁴² It also notes the need to evaluate the impact of the Employment Tax Incentive (discussed on p. 55). While these policies make positive recommendations, targets are often over-inflated and they do not provide sufficient guidance on how to coordinate efforts across departments and sectors to enhance youth economic participation.

Employability interventions

Given the youth's low skills profile and challenges they face in navigating the labour market, a key intervention is enhancing the employability of young people. Employability refers to the skills and attributes that make a young person more "marketable" in the workplace, and that assist young people to navigate the labour market and workplace more effectively. This includes learnerships, entrepreneurship development programmes, service programmes, and short-term skills development programmes run by the state, civil society and the private sector.

Learnerships – or on-the-job training programmes – allow young people to complete a post-secondary qualification that is paid for by the employer while gaining work experience, thereby enhancing their prospects for later employment. Three organisations are worth mentioning. The company EOH provides information and communications technology and related services to client companies. Since 2011, EOH has developed an extensive learnership programme that attracts over 1,000 learners each year.⁴³ Learners complete an initial two-week work-readiness programme that focuses on basic workplace skills including punctuality, dress code and interpersonal communication. Thereafter they can choose to enrol in a particular qualification. They are placed at an EOH branch and mentored by an allocated supervisor and learnership co-ordinator, and receive a stipend. Once the learnership is completed, most are offered employment in the company. The EOH model has more recently been rolled out to its clients. EOH retains the training and coordination of the learners while clients provide work placement and supervision. Although the programme has not yet been independently evaluated,^{vi} it shows promise in enhancing young people's employment prospects and being relatively easy to scale up through partnerships.

vi The programme will be evaluated as part of the national Siyakha Youth Assets and Employability Study of the Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A second learnership programme in the social sector is loveLife's groundBREAKERS programme. Originally started as an intervention to reduce youth risk behaviour, groundBREAKERS has evolved into a learnership programme in which participants gain skills in community and youth programme development and management. They gain workplace experience by running youth programmes through local NGOs in return for a small stipend. A study found that the programme had a positive effect on participants' employment chances and access to post-secondary education.⁴⁴

The National Youth Service (NYS) programme run by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is a year-long programme, based on the international YouthBuild model,⁴⁵ which places participants in a structured programme focused on technical, life- and work-readiness skills. The approach was piloted in 2011 and has been scaled up through partnerships with national and provincial government departments such as the Department of Human Settlements and local municipalities. While the National Youth Service Programme of the NYDA is involved in monitoring the roll-out of the programme, it has never conducted an impact assessment.⁴⁶

Learnerships tend to be quite formal in nature and are aligned to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Other, less formal programmes can also offer young people a stepping stone into work. These may be run by national, provincial or local governments, businesses or civil society. Most follow the model of shorter classroom training time combined with some work experience,⁴⁷ which takes the form of volunteering, service or work placements. The training programmes include hard skills development (ranging from retail or hospitality skills to plumbing and welding); soft skills development (self-esteem, communication skills), basic literacy and numeracy, computer literacy and work-readiness training (how to effectively look for and apply for a job, interviewing skills, and workplace conduct). Most programmes offer participants some form of support as they exit the programme, either in the form of referrals or ongoing mentorship.

Young people find it easy to connect with these programmes, particularly ones located within the civil society sector: they operate in local communities, have minimal entry requirements, do not require technical application processes, and the costs to participants are low.⁴⁸ Most programmes are highly flexible and adaptable with some degree of standardisation.

However, they also have significant weaknesses. The majority of these programmes have little interaction with employers thus limiting their ability to develop skills that are of interest to employers. While most include some degree of monitoring, independent evaluations and impact assessments are missing. This raises questions as to whether such interventions are effective and, if so, how best to scale them up to reach more young people.

Evidence suggests that participation in youth employability programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and other developing countries is positively associated with employment and earnings.⁴⁹ But this literature does not unpack the different types of interventions or

their various components. Further research is needed to decipher exactly what kinds of employability interventions work, what combination of programme components is most effective, and to determine the costs and benefits of such interventions.

Enhancing demand for youth employees

Two of the largest programmes aimed at enhancing demand for work-seekers, including young work-seekers, are the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP). Both are large-scale public employment programmes aiming to provide short-term employment alongside training to people who are otherwise unemployed. The aim of the programmes, beyond providing short-term employment, is to prepare people for more permanent or longer-term employment.⁵⁰ Within both programmes, 40% of participants are supposed to be youth (aged 18 – 35). To date, these targets have been met and exceeded. However, the EPWP and CBPWP have been heavily criticised as they do not provide adequate skills training,⁵¹ nor prepare people adequately for jobs within the open labour market, nor enable them to develop their own livelihoods in the informal economy. This suggests that such programmes provide a stop-gap measure but do not significantly shift young people's employability and employment prospects. They nevertheless represent a significant state financial investment to support young people's attempts to enter the labour market. This may mean that, if current shortfalls are adequately addressed, they offer a leverage point for enhancing employability outcomes for young people.

The Employment Tax Incentive (ETI) is a recent national intervention to increase demand for young employees. Companies who employ youth aged 18 – 29 can apply for a reduction in the amount of Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax, which is intended to help companies offset the costs of training young employees.⁵² Results from a randomised control trial of the pilot programme demonstrated that young people with wage subsidy vouchers^{vii} were 25% more likely to find and retain work than those who did not have vouchers.⁵³ Based on these findings, the ETI was implemented in January 2014. An evaluation of the ETI six months after inception was carried out and findings reflected no discernible effects on youth unemployment rates.⁵⁴ A possible reason for this finding is that at six months after inception of the ETI, employers may not yet have been fully aware of the programme. Furthermore, hiring decisions would not be governed solely by the availability of the ETI; increased hiring would also depend on feasibility of expansion, a decision process that may take more than six months.

Another approach to promoting demand for young work-seekers has been to try shift employers' perceptions. Impact sourcing is a process by which employers intentionally employ people who are vulnerable to unemployment and who would not normally be seen as viable employees.⁵⁵ Through this approach companies shift their perceptions of the minimum requirements for entry-level positions and implement policies and programmes that recruit such work-seekers and support them to stay and

vii A wage subsidy voucher allows the employer of the young person to claim back a portion of the wage that is paid to the worker.

Case 5: Harambee – Enabling youth labour market transitions

The Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator is a high-impact intervention to address youth unemployment based on the premise that there are entry-level jobs available, but that employers are reluctant to place young, first-time workers due to perceived risks. Since 2011, Harambee has been targeting employers to shift their perceptions about employing young workers, based on the motivation that employing young people makes human resourcing and business sense, and enables companies to contribute to national development.

Harambee has established that they are able to provide young, first-time workers who perform well and are likely to stay in their jobs. They can ensure this because of the support they provide to young work-seekers who are recruited via social media, word-of-mouth, community radio stations, and other community-based recruitment strategies. Youth are initially screened for numeracy and literacy potential, and are assessed to determine which sector they would be ideally suited to. Once youth have been screened, they are either counselled out of the programme (if they do not meet the placement criteria) or routed into different bridging programmes depending on their match to industry requirements. For instance, young people with competencies for retail will undergo a six-day bridging programme focusing on retail-specific skills; while those with competencies in business process outsourcing will go through an eight-week bridging programme as this requires longer-term training. All bridging programmes include workplace readiness

skills. Participants are then groomed for job interviews, and Harambee facilitates the engagement between the employer and various participants so that the employer may select the participants they prefer.

Harambee reached its initial goal of placing 10,000 young people in September 2014. Although the programme has not been evaluated for impact, Harambee does track participants and relies on feedback from employers. They report a higher retention rate than other placement agencies with almost 75% of their placements staying in their jobs for at least 12 months. This benefits the employee who is able to demonstrate commitment to other potential employers. It also benefits the employer who can reduce costs by retaining staff. These gains in turn help to make a case to other potential employers to employ young people.

A key design feature of the Harambee programme is that it addresses both the supply and demand side of the labour market equation. It addresses employers' fears about employing young people and skills up young people through short-term interventions. The programme also demonstrates the potential of young people, harnessing young people's desire to enter the labour market, and providing the connections that young people need to take that first step into employment. Harambee is demonstrating how to approach the challenge of youth unemployment innovatively but there remains a need to assess the impact of the programme.

grow in the workplace. Successes have been seen in the business process outsourcing sector^{viii} in which individuals, and particularly young people, from poor areas in Africa and Asia are targeted for entry-level positions.⁵⁶ Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator is a programme, funded by the Jobs Fund of the National Treasury and businesses, that encourages employers to employ young work-seekers with a matric qualification who would otherwise not be seen as "viable employees". Harambee has higher retention rates than other recruitment companies and has shown the ability to up-skill young matriculants quickly in preparation for entry-level jobs.⁵⁷ Harambee (see case 5 above) placed their 10,000th candidate in September 2014.

Addressing barriers to accessing the labour market

Alongside efforts to enhance the employability of youth and to drive demand for young employees, there are interventions that support young people in their attempts to connect to the labour market.

High transport costs are a key barrier preventing young people's access to the labour market in South Africa. A current study aims

to establish whether a transport subsidy in the form of travel vouchers has any impact on the job search behaviour of youth.⁵⁸

Many young people can also not meet a range of additional costs related to work-seeking and accessing post-secondary education. A small amount of savings may therefore make a difference in their ability to seek work more effectively, start small businesses or access post-secondary education. International evidence suggests that savings are associated with a change in young people's sense of future prospects⁵⁹ and are a significant predictor of college enrolment and progress.⁶⁰ A South African study is currently assessing whether such an intervention may support young people's transition to work.⁶¹

Another initiative of the NYDA is the Jobs and Opportunities Seekers (JOBS) programme – an online database intended to link unemployed young people with job and skills development opportunities. But, there is limited information about the impact of JOBS on helping young people to transition to work.

Temporary employment services or labour brokers may enable young people to access information on available jobs, especially when they live far from job opportunities and do not

viii A process of outsourcing particular business processes (such as call centres or data analytics) to a third party. These processes often involve high levels of engagement with information and communication technology, making young people an attractive potential workforce.

have access to the internet. Many employees are placed into their first jobs through such labour brokers.⁶² Analysis of the Cape Area Panel Study data demonstrates that about 5.5% of youth in the greater Cape Town Metropolitan area found work through temporary employment agencies, the same percentage as those who found jobs through newspaper advertisements.⁶³ While such organisations play an important role in connecting young people to first-time job opportunities, these are typically temporary in nature and there is no research to determine whether they assist young people to find more permanent work.

What are some of the possible ways to address youth unemployment in South Africa?

There are a number of promising initiatives in research, policy and practice that should help strengthen systems and support youth employment; yet these efforts tend to be fragmented and a more coordinated effort is required to develop more comprehensive approaches to youth unemployment.

Develop a stronger evidence base

There is a strong need for a cross-disciplinary, integrated analysis of the drivers of youth unemployment, alongside policies and interventions that aim to strengthen the demand side of the labour market and to increase youth employability – one that can determine evidence of what works, identify gaps in knowledge and policies, and begin to develop a coordinated theory of change to address youth unemployment. To address this gap, a systematic overview of research on youth unemployment drivers, programmatic and policy interventions will be undertaken by the Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg and the Poverty and Inequality Initiative at the University of Cape Town.

Strengthen support for young people who do not access formal post-secondary education

Youth who do complete post-secondary education have a good chance of finding employment, but major efforts are needed to enhance skills development and employability of young people who do not have matric or post-secondary education and training. While there are a range of interventions currently targeting such young people, further research is needed to determine the impact of interventions. Do they enhance technical and workplace readiness skills? How effective are they, and what is the potential of up-scaling them at a reasonable cost? These questions are currently being researched in the hope that clearer answers will enhance support for young people who cannot access post-secondary education.⁶⁴ It is important to strengthen monitoring and evaluation as well as coordination efforts across programmes and sectors to achieve a positive impact on youth employability.

Target young people as they exit school

Interventions tend to target young people once they have exited the schooling system and are already unemployed. While such efforts are important, we also need to target young people as they

exit the schooling and social protection system, as they age out of the Child Support Grant (CSG). In this way those who struggle most to access the labour market could effectively be targeted with co-ordinated short- or long-term programmes that enhance their skills and connect them to the workplace. By targeting young people as they leave school, unemployment could be prevented rather than having to mitigate the effects of longer-term unemployment.

Extending the CSG to young people beyond 18 years of age is currently being considered by government.⁶⁵ This policy proposal warrants discussion as it acknowledges the fact that most young people after the age of 18 years are not ready to provide for themselves and may need additional support as they attempt to transition to work or further education. However, extending the beneficiary age for the CSG might not result in the kinds of transformative outcomes that are required. Rather, it is worth considering a package of support to young people that involves some financial support but which is also connected to investments in services including skills development, work placement or volunteer opportunities, job search support, and subsidising application fees for post-secondary education.

Create work opportunities for young people still at school

Interventions aimed at young people who are still at school are also needed. Working while at school increases the chances to find work. Interventions that link school-going youth with workplace opportunities over weekends or school holidays may provide poorer young people with the social and cultural capital they need to access the labour market later on, and help reduce the high rates of unemployment among school leavers.

Support the livelihood efforts of young people

The state has largely overlooked the role of the informal sector in generating employment. Yet qualitative evidence suggests that youth engage in a range of informal strategies to generate a livelihood. Government agencies such as the NYDA and employability programmes could also focus on strengthening the capacity of young people to operate more effectively in the informal economy. Entrepreneurship training that takes the informal economy seriously as a space for business development could assist young people already working in this economy.

There is also a need for increased support to youth co-operatives. For example, the Vulindlela Jozi programme of the City of Johannesburg partners with businesses who assist youth cooperatives to meet the technical requirements of bidding for a tender, and then actively encourages youth cooperatives to tender for municipal contracts.⁶⁶

Qualitative evidence points to the agency of young people who often volunteer within their local communities without any form of support or stipend.⁶⁷ Local municipalities should ideally find ways to connect these young people to programmes like the CBPWP so that they are able to receive a stipend for their efforts. Similarly, youth desks in local municipalities could drive youth development activities within communities that engage youth volunteers and offer them both a stipend and training opportunities.

Increase demand for young workers

Potential also rests in enhancing demand for youth employees. Although positive effects of the ETI are not yet evident, further research into the ETI's impact is warranted to investigate whether positive changes in youth absorption into the labour market would occur over time, or, if not, to understand what might be holding employers back from using the incentive.

The EPWP and CBPWP programmes represent massive state investments. Enhancing the training components of these programmes could increase both the demand for, and employability of, young people. For example, a recent partnership between the NYDA'S National Youth Service Unit and the EPWP aims to enhance young people's work readiness.

Impact sourcing is perceived, by employers, to have positive results and these efforts need to be recognised and built upon. Combined with the ETI there seems to be considerable potential in shifting employer opinion about the value of employing young people in entry-level positions. Interventions such as impact sourcing, led by the business sector, could also be coupled with

support services that assist young people to work effectively and stay in the workplace.

Help young people access work opportunities

Finally, further work is needed to help connect young people to workplace opportunities. The transport subsidy and savings studies are promising in that they are testing empirically whether simple interventions could assist youth.

A cobbled pathway to employment

Young people face multiple obstacles on their path from education to the labour market. The existing research, interventions and policies are evidence of the wish to address youth unemployment in South Africa. However, they remain uncoordinated, often inaccessible and far removed from the lives of young people. In a labour market where the pathway to employment is unlikely to be smooth for most young people, we require a range of cobblestones that, with each step, help a young person to make his or her way to employment or some form of sustainable livelihood.

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Youth health and well-being:

Why it matters

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Over half of the South African population are under the age of 25. This “youth bulge” has the potential to provide a future “demographic dividend” to South Africa in the form of increased economic productivity. However, such a boon is dependent on a number of factors, key of which is that young people are healthy. Currently, the burden of disease among youth is high, with tuberculosis (TB) and HIV emerging as the leading causes of death among all youth in the country, along with violence and traffic accidents for young men.¹

Improving the health and well-being of adolescents and youth is crucial for their well-being *today*, and for their *future* economic productivity, because behaviour and health developed during these stages of life are key predictors of the *adult* burden of disease, and because health – like education – is a key factor in the intergenerational transmission of poverty.²

Better youth health is dependent on the provision of high-quality health services, but is also much intertwined with factors falling outside the realm of the health sector.³ Poverty, in all its dimensions,⁴ undermines health and well-being through a variety of pathways. Poor nutrition, for example, impacts negatively on a young person’s capacity to learn, progress through school and earning potential. Poor living conditions and physical inactivity lead to a higher burden of chronic respiratory and/or heart disease. Exposure to domestic violence and harsh discipline increases the risk of young people becoming either victims or perpetrators of violence.

Individual factors such as delinquency and substance abuse impact on young people’s well-being and are predictors of future ill health. Family level factors such as the absence of warm, positive parenting, as well as community level elements such as gang violence, for instance, impact on the emotional health of youth and may, in turn, undermine educational outcomes and employment chances.

Against this backdrop, this essay provides an overview of the current state of youth health and well-being in South Africa and identifies opportunities to improve outcomes by focusing on the following key questions:

- What do we know about youth health?
- What is being done to improve youth health?
- What can strengthen initiatives to improve youth health?

What do we know about youth health?

*Together, adolescence and young adulthood represent a period of experimentation and identity formation, and also a time when lifelong behaviour patterns are typically initiated or established. WHO estimates that 70 percent of premature deaths in adults worldwide are the result of behaviors begun in adolescence.*⁴

Adolescence and young adulthood are times of rapid physical and psychosocial change and development. They are stages in which parental influence decreases and the influence of peers and media increases.⁵ As a result, these stages are often associated with a rise in experimentation and exploration, a search for identity, and a consequent increase in risky behaviour, alcohol and substance use and abuse, possible sexual and reproductive health (SRH) problems, violence and mental illness.⁶ In addition, growing up in poverty creates specific challenges for a large proportion of the country’s youth.

In South Africa, the leading causes of death among young people differ by gender, race and income status. Statistics South Africa reports that the leading causes of death among young men aged 15 – 29 in 2013 were “external causes”, with a peak among 20 – 24-year-olds. This reflects the risk of violence, injuries and traffic accidents. Among young women of the same age group, communicable diseasesⁱⁱ were the leading cause of death, in particular TB and HIV.⁷

This section outlines some of the leading health issues affecting South Africa’s youth, including sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and violence. It further elaborates on substance abuse and mental health, both of which are intricately related to the drivers and consequences of ill health. The essay further highlights how young people’s lifestyle choices are shaped by a complex interplay of social norms, economic, gender and spatial inequalities, poor physical environmental conditions and inadequate access to services.

Sexual and reproductive health

Exploring sexuality and intimate relationships are key components of youth SRH and well-being. However various social factors – such as peer pressure, intimate partner violence, rape, a lack of knowledge

i The essay on p. 22 and the *Children Count – The Numbers* section on p. 100 outline multiple dimensions of deprivation for children and young people in South Africa.
ii Communicable diseases “are those diseases that are infectious and include, among others, diseases such as tuberculosis, intestinal infectious diseases and influenza and pneumonia.” (See no. 1 in references)

about SRH and barriers to contraception – also contribute to high rates of unprotected sex.⁸ This places a substantial proportion of South Africa's youth at risk of unwanted pregnancies, sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV infection. Young women bear a disproportionately high burden of sexual and reproductive ill health.

Youth pregnancy

Youth pregnancy is associated with significant health risks and socio-economic costs. While South Africa's teenage childbearing declined from 30% to 23% from 1984 to 2008,⁹ it remains a serious concern. Teen mothers have poorer educational outcomes than non-teen mothers, which has negative implications for their future chances economically.¹⁰ Studies consistently find that pregnancy and childbearing contribute significantly to falling behind and dropping out of school,¹¹ as well as discrimination and exclusion from school.¹²

Pregnant teenagers are at greater risk of maternal health problems, accounting for 33% of all maternal deaths in South Africa.¹³ Early access to antenatal care is critical for safer pregnancies and birth, yet youth attendance is particularly poor. Pregnant girls and young women cite the lack of privacy, confidentiality, and the fear of coerced HIV testing, as some of the obstacles to attending health care services.¹⁴ Furthermore, children born to teen mothers are at risk of poorer health and educational outcomes – feeding the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Kuthala's story (case 6) illustrates the interplay of various factors that shape young adolescents' decisions around sexual behaviour – the inaccessibility of youth-friendly health services and a lack of support and information after birth – which have a cumulative impact on young girls' education and emotional health.

HIV

Globally, young people aged 15 – 24 comprise 41% of new HIV infections in those older than 15 years.¹⁶ In South Africa, young women aged 15 – 19 are at highest risk of HIV and eight times more likely to be HIV positive than similar aged young men (5.6% vs 0.7%).¹⁷ Furthermore, HIV is related to a range of other illnesses such as TB, listed by Statistics South Africa as the leading cause of death among young women.¹⁸

The drivers of the HIV and AIDS pandemic are complex and multi-faceted. Women have a higher biological susceptibility to HIV, but "a host of sociocultural and economic factors rooted in gender power inequities [further] exacerbate women's vulnerability to infection".¹⁹ Gender inequality, coerced sexual relations and economic insecurity that leads to transactional sex make it significantly more difficult for young women to negotiate condom use: Between 2008 and 2012, reported condom use by males at last sex declined from 85% to 68% while reported condom use by females declined from 67% to 50%.²⁰

Research consistently indicates the negative economic and psychosocial impact of HIV infection on families and individuals, especially adolescents and youth.²¹ The expansion of antiretroviral treatment also means that babies infected in the perinatal period are living healthy lives, thus entering adolescence and young adulthood. While they have SRH needs common to other youth, they also have needs specific to living with HIV. Many recount insecurity in approaching intimate relationships due to their HIV status and rarely have their SRH needs adequately met in HIV care.²²

Violence

Most young people in South Africa are exposed to violence in their homes, schools and broader neighbourhoods – this includes

Case 6: Khuthala – The health complexities of a young mother's life in a South African township

Khuthala (not her real name) was 18 at the time of our first interview, and mother of a one-year-old boy. She lived in Gugulethu with her mother, father, brother and baby. As a child, her father drank, abused her mother, and left no money for school fees, uniforms or food. Her grandparents therefore asked her to come and live with them in the Eastern Cape but when they died, she moved back to Cape Town. Khuthala still resented her father, but reported that she had a stable relationship with her mother, who supported her during her pregnancy.

Khuthala loved school but her unplanned pregnancy led to her dropping out in grade 11. Her story reflects how the institutions that are expected to provide guidance and support fail today's youth: Her family home was not a place of safety and when Khuthala went to the clinic to ask for the contraceptive pill, the nurses told her they only gave injections.

This echoes other research which describes how medical staff can be unsupportive of teens, scolding them for sexual activity and being reluctant to provide them with contraceptives.¹⁵ Khuthala was left alone to make a decision about contraception within a relationship she considered stable and mature enough not to use condoms any more. She had unprotected sex with her boyfriend of over a year and fell pregnant.

After the birth of the baby, Khuthala felt she had "lost herself", as she could no longer go to school and had no time to read or think. She felt "stupid" about having fallen pregnant, but tried to maintain a positive attitude.

She considered finding a part-time job, taking the baby to crèche and studying part-time once the child was two years old. However, a year later she had taken on a full-time job in a clothing shop because "something had happened at home". She was uncertain about her chances of returning to school.

Source: De Lannoy A (2008) *Educational Decision-making in an Era of AIDS*. PhD Thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

homicides, intimate partner violence and rape. Exposure to violence and deviant peer behaviour increases the likelihood of high risk and violent behaviour among youth as they seek stronger connections with peers. Further, structural factors such as poor quality education, high levels of unemployment and economic hardship may lead youth to be attracted to gang-related activities.²³

Experiences of violence in South Africa are shaped by age, gender, socio-economic status and geographical location. A disproportionate number of young men in the country are both victims and perpetrators of violence,²⁴ and data on registered deaths in 2013 show that “external causes of death” accounted for approximately 60% of deaths among young men aged 15 – 24²⁵. Young men living in poor, urban areas are at greatest risk of interpersonal violence, whereas girls and young women are at highest risk of sexual violence.²⁶ Dominant constructions of masculinity, including norms that demand toughness and strength and avoiding expressions of emotion and weakness,²⁷ increase the chances of men becoming both victims and perpetrators of violence and place young women at risk of sexual violence. Violence is particularly prevalent in poor communities where poverty, unemployment, poor quality schooling and a lack of recreational facilities may leave little opportunity for young men to gain a sense of belonging and “respect”. Feelings of frustration and marginalisation may find expression in violent encounters with women and other young men.²⁸

Sexual and intimate partner violence against girls and women are leading causes of health problems such as unwanted pregnancy and STIs, HIV infection, and mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder.²⁹ In 2013/2014, 46,253 rapes were reported to the police,³⁰ and this is estimated as a fraction of actual rapes in South Africa.³¹ Girls younger than 20 report high rates of coerced sex, particularly in first sexual encounters.³²

I was still young, I was about 15. This guy would force me to do what he wants me to do at his own time. He would hit me, try to have sex with me, close the door, tie me [up] to have sex with him. (22-year-old female, Johannesburg)³³

The Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS) provides data on experiences of violence among public high school learners in grades 8 – 11.³⁴ In the month before the survey, a third of learners reported being bullied at school, 17% reported feeling unsafe travelling to school, and 13% reported carrying a weapon. Sexual and intimate partner violence are also prevalent: 11% of learners reported being assaulted by their romantic partner in the six months preceding the survey; and just under 10% of learners had experienced forced sex.

Substance abuse

Globally, an estimated 70% of premature adult deaths are the result of behaviours begun in adolescence, many of which relate to substance use.³⁵ Tobacco use, for example, is a leading cause of adult non-communicable diseases such as chronic respiratory diseases, heart diseases and cancer. Excessive alcohol use can create long-term liver and kidney problems, brain changes and

can lead to negative social behaviour.³⁶ In South Africa, alcohol, “tik” (crystal methamphetamine) and mixed drug use are linked to increased physical and sexual violence and crime.³⁷ Substance misuse is also associated with riskier sexual behaviour, which increases risks of HIV and STIs. Intervening early is therefore key to enhancing young people’s well-being today, and to ensuring better health in the future.

South Africa’s youth increasingly engage in hazardous drinking and drug abuse, and the treatment demand for youth substance abuse and addiction has increased over the past two decades. Alcohol and cannabis are the main substances of choice, but youth are also experimenting with, and abusing methamphetamines, heroin and mandrax.³⁸ Overall smoking among South Africa’s high school students decreased from 23% to 17% between 1999 and 2011, but increased slightly for girls.³⁹ Box 5 highlights problems with alcohol and drug misuse amongst South Africa’s youth.

Box 5: Youth alcohol and drug misuse

- 49.2% of South Africa’s school-going youth have had one or more alcoholic drinks in their lifetime.
- Approximately a third (32.3%) of these youth reported having engaged in binge-drinking on one or more days in the month preceding the survey.
- 12.7% of the youth reported having used cannabis in their lifetime.
- 11.5% of learners reported having used at least one of the following drugs: mandrax, heroin, cocaine or methamphetamine.

Source: Reddy SP, James S, Sewpaul R, Sifunda S, Ellahebokus A, Kambaran NS & Omdien RG (2013) *Umthente Uhlaba Usamila – The 3rd South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2011*. Cape Town: South African Medical Research Council.

Key drivers of drinking include peer pressure, boredom, high youth unemployment and cheap and easy access to alcohol.⁴⁰ Research in Durban and Cape Town with 1,468 girls and boys aged between 12 – 17 has highlighted the significant impact of environmental stressors (such as discrimination and violent victimisation), parental child-rearing (the absence of warm, positive parenting), parental drug use, peer drug use, and adolescent personal attributes (especially delinquency) on youth illicit substance abuse.⁴¹ A more recent study with over 2,000 youth in South Africa found a strong connection between environmental factors such as violent victimisation and “low well-being”, i.e. depression, low self-esteem or ill health. These, in turn, influenced alcohol use and smoking in adolescents.⁴² This underlines the need to understand emotional well-being of South Africa’s adolescents in more detail.

Mental health

There is growing evidence that poverty increases the risk of mental illness, and that people with mental illnesses are more likely to drift into or remain in poverty. While the precise mechanisms are unclear, two primary causal pathways have been identified (see figure 15). Poverty is often associated with experiences of social exclusion, heightened stress, violence and trauma, which may

increase the risk and severity of mental illness and substance misuse, and compromise access to care. At the same time people with mental illness are more likely to slide into poverty as a result of increased health expenditure, stigma, loss of employment and income.⁴³

In addition, exposure to violence, substance abuse and HIV lead to increased vulnerability to mental health problems among young people.⁴⁴ The YRBS found that one in four youth (24.7%) reported feeling sad or hopeless, and just under 18% had made at least one suicide attempt. Only 37.2% of youth who reported feelings of sadness had sought treatment from a counsellor or doctor. Significantly, more young women (20%) than young men (15%) had considered suicide. The report recommended that:

*More research needs to be conducted to explore the underlying determinants of this serious mental health problem. Intervention development and implementation needs to be accelerated together with evaluation mechanisms for both treatment and prevention of these mental health problems.*⁴⁵

Finally, poor mental health is related to other health and developmental concerns in young people such as lower educational achievement, substance abuse, violence and poorer reproductive and sexual health.⁴⁶ Mental health disorders are also accompanied by suffering, stigma and financial strain,⁴⁷ which can influence the extent to which mental health disorders are reported and lead to underestimated prevalence data⁴⁸.

What is being done to improve youth health?

Since 1994, government has introduced a range of laws, policies and programmes to promote youth health. However, their impact has been variable due to challenges with policy design and implementation, and due to insufficient attention to the underlying social determinants of youth health.

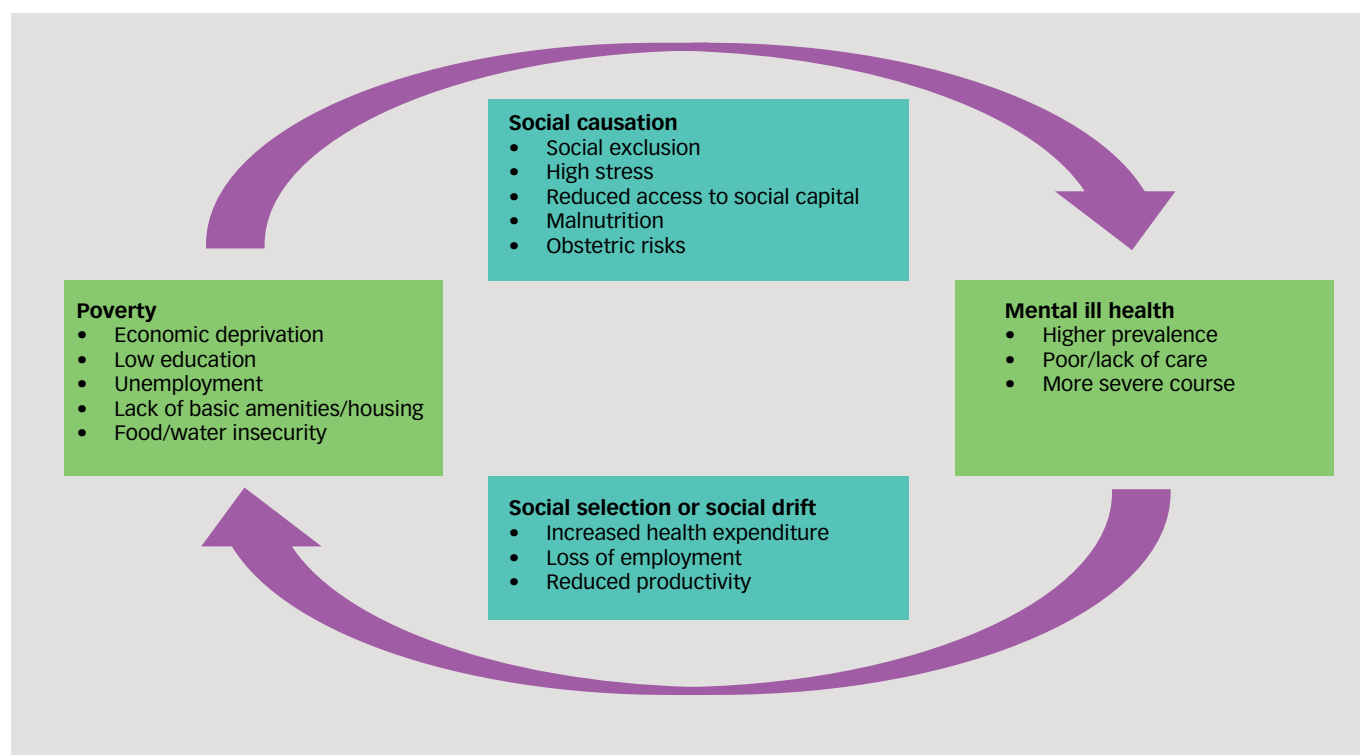
Non-governmental youth health programmes focus primarily on the prevention of violence and promotion of sexual and reproductive health. These include national media campaigns promoting HIV awareness among youth such as Soul City and loveLife, and peer education programmes to prevent HIV and gender-based violence such as Stepping Stones.

Evaluation of these type of programmes shows varying measures of success.⁴⁹ Shortcomings identified in several programmes highlight the limitations of attempting to change individual health behaviours without adequately addressing broader social determinants of health.

Adolescent and youth-friendly clinics

Despite a legal entitlement to sexual and reproductive health care, including contraception on request from age 12, and abortion in terms of the law without an age restriction, youth experience numerous barriers in accessing health care. These include transport costs, clinic hours clashing with school timetables, a lack of privacy and confidentiality, and negative attitudes of health care workers.⁵⁰

Figure 15: A vicious cycle of poverty and mental ill health



Source: Lund C, de Silva M, Plagerson S, Cooper S, Chisholm D, Das J, Knapp M & Patel V (2012) *Poverty and Mental disorders: Breaking the Cycle in Low-income and Middle-income Countries*. Prime Policy Brief 1. Cape Town: Programme for Improving Mental Health Care, UCT.

Case 7: Assessing school, facility and community-based sexual and reproductive health services

After extensive community consultation, the Centre for AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa piloted a youth SRH intervention programme in the Vulindlela area of KwaZulu-Natal in 2011/12 to assess adolescents' preferences for different forms of SRH interventions. Students in 14 schools were rotated through three SRH interventions. In one intervention arm, students were provided with school-based services including group information and awareness sessions led by school nurses and a mobile clinic service.

In a second arm, individual SRH counselling was provided at school in collaboration with an NGO focusing on relationships, negotiating sex, assertive behaviour and high-risk sexual practices. In a third arm, students could either access school-based SRH counselling and services, or SRH services at primary health clinics. Services were offered both during and out of school hours.

The evaluation of the pilot showed that brief in-class information sessions facilitated student uptake of individual SRH and HIV counselling and testing. In general, youth preferred in-school and mobile services that offered a variety of SRH information, counselling and care rather than those based at health care facilities.

Source: Frohlich JA, Mkhize N, Dellar RC, Mahlase GB, Montague CT & Abdool Karim Q (2014) Meeting the sexual and reproductive health needs of high-school students in South Africa: Experiences from rural KwaZulu-Natal. *South African Medical Journal*, 104(10): 687-690.

In 1999 the government introduced the National Adolescent Friendly Clinic Initiative (NAFCI) to improve delivery of facility-based SRH services to youth. A recent analysis of NAFCI's impact indicates that:

*[A] youth-targeted reproductive health initiative has the potential to substantially and significantly reduce the likelihood of early teen childbearing ... [The] preliminary results suggest an increase in educational attainment related to delaying age at first birth.*⁵¹

Further analysis is needed, however, to disentangle exactly how the different components of NAFCI – education and increased access to clinical care – impact on teen fertility.

School-based programmes and services

School-based health services are widely considered an effective strategy for providing comprehensive primary health care to school-going youth.⁵² South Africa is introducing school health teams as part of its primary health care re-engineering programme.⁵³ Its new Integrated School Health Policy aims to strengthen existing services and will offer: screening for sight, hearing and oral hygiene; treatment of minor conditions; SRH counselling and either provision of, or referral for, contraceptive services.⁵⁴ (While making condoms available in schools is under review, current policies do not allow for provision of condoms or contraception at school.)

The policy also provides for health education in schools to address hygiene, nutrition, abuse, sexual and reproductive health, menstruation, contraception, STIs and HIV, male circumcision, pregnancy and termination of pregnancy, drug and substance abuse and suicide.⁵⁵ While these new initiatives are important,⁵⁶ school health services are unlikely to be able to meet all youth health needs. Expansion of initiatives offering sport, recreation and community-based services for in- and out-of-school youth are also of key importance.⁵⁷

Efforts to address violence

Physical and sexual violence is criminalised in South Africa, falling within the ambit of either the Children's Act, Domestic Violence Act or the Sexual Offences Act. Family violence, child abuse and sexual offences police units and special sexual offences courts were established in 1999, disbanded in 2011, and reintroduced following pressure from civil society in 2013. Government has also established Thuthuzela Care Centres in communities where rates of rape are particularly high. These centres bring together specially trained health professionals, social workers, police investigators and prosecutors to reduce secondary trauma, improve conviction rates and enhance coordination across different services.

Non-governmental organisations such as Mosaic and Rape Crisis provide valuable models of counselling and care for survivors of sexual violence. The Tswaranang Legal Advocacy Centre to End Violence Against Women gives legal assistance and advice on access to health services for women survivors of sexual violence. The Shukumisa Campaign promotes action by government and civil society organisations against sexual violence, while the Sexual Violence Research Initiative at the South African Medical Research Council is building a research evidence base and feeding into government policy. In addition, Sonke Gender Justice works with men and boys, and its peer education programmes engage them in activities to challenge attitudes, values and behaviours that compromise their own health and safety and that of women.⁵⁸

While a number of local campaigns against sexual violence have been implemented successfully across rural and urban South African communities, there is a need for more rigorous evaluation to establish the strengths and limitations of these campaigns.⁵⁹

Substance abuse initiatives

Since the mid-1990s the government has implemented comprehensive tobacco control measures – banning advertising of tobacco products, classifying nicotine as an addictive drug, restricting smoking in public places, increasing excise duties, and prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to children under 18. School-based education programmes discourage smoking. School-going youths' decreased smoking prevalence is important, particularly given increased smoking rates among adolescents globally. However, girls' increased smoking rates need attention.

Similarly, the government has introduced a number of mechanisms to reduce alcohol availability to minors through increased taxation and restricting liquor outlets,⁶⁰ but alcohol remains easily accessible to youth.

Case 8: Disability and the perpetuation of poverty – A need for inclusive youth development

Theresa Lorenzo and Roshan Galvaan

The UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disability as including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.⁶¹ Recognising that disabled youth represent 7.5% of the total population of youth in South Africa,⁶² the National Youth Policy calls for inclusive policies that promote equal opportunities for disabled youth. Groce⁶³ supports this call, pointing out that the needs of both disabled and non-disabled youth are similar. Yet many programmes miss the opportunity to address the specific needs of youth with disability. Basic infrastructure developments should address the inaccessibility of toilets, housing and transport as physical assets.⁶⁴ While disability grants significantly improve general living conditions, financial resources and material possessions, persons with disabilities are excluded from equal access to employment and education.⁶⁵

A cross-sectional survey of youth with and without disabilities across South Africa⁶⁶ found there was a large difference in school attendance and/or completion between non-disabled and disabled youth (99.3% v. 82.4%). There is poor retention of disabled youth from the primary to the secondary level of schooling. Key barriers in accessing education included inadequate support to equip teachers and parents with the knowledge and skills to implement inclusive education; and an absence of information on bursaries and other sources of funding. While the National Youth Policy advocates for inclusive education at all levels and accelerated implementation of the White Paper on Special Needs education, further attention should be given to mechanisms to accelerate such implementation. Mechanisms should attend to the multiple interpretations of and misconceptions related to disability and inclusive education and the way that professional roles, for example of therapists, are changing and influenced in response to inclusive education.⁶⁷

Disabled youth identified poor health and skills development as the main barriers to securing employment opportunities.⁶⁸ Further analysis of a snowball sample of 523 disabled youth aged 18 – 35 years identified how the presence of community rehabilitation workers was associated with significant improvements in disabled youth's access to health care and education, which should improve their participation in economic development.⁶⁹ Better dissemination of information at community level could enable youth with disabilities to engage in social activities. Recreational facilities also need to be made accessible.⁷⁰

Untreated mental disorders in youth have a negative impact on adjustment to and productive participation in adulthood.⁷¹ For example, stigma and limited access to services may affect their ability to deal with mental illnesses and to participate fully in opportunities and may serve to further perpetuate poverty. Health promotion, violence and substance abuse prevention programmes contribute to reduced risks of suicides.

Awareness of their rights should enable disabled youth to advocate for their needs at local government level to create an inclusive environment in which they are able to participate in mainstream youth development opportunities. Such collaborative learning would help address the social injustices experienced by disabled youth.⁷² Empowerment of disabled youth who live in impoverished contexts would create enabling environments, inclusive attitudes, access to information and affordable public transport, which are some of the critical factors that facilitate equal participation.⁷³

The citizenship of disabled youth can further be promoted through more data describing and monitoring possible mechanisms for promoting inclusion of disabled youth. Such inclusive research could contribute to achieving this aspirational goal of the National Development Plan and active citizenship by all.

Government has allocated increased resources to “the delivery of substance abuse treatment, expanding the number of state-funded treatment slots and training additional health and social workers to deliver these services”.⁷⁴ It is, however, important to ensure high quality of services – a priority captured in the country's National Drug Master Plan⁷⁵ – which will require routine monitoring and evaluation.

Mental health

South Africa's mental health policies aim to promote information, provide culturally sensitive, safe and supportive mental health environments and counselling, and improve access to mental health services with a focus on community-based models of care.⁷⁶ However, there are no implementation guidelines to give effect

to these policies.⁷⁷ Mental health services in South Africa remain poorly resourced, with a limited focus on youth, and curatively oriented rather than focusing on preventive and promotive health.⁷⁸

Despite the strong association between substance misuse and mental health problems, integration of drug and mental health treatment is lacking,⁷⁹ as are initiatives to address the strong connections between youth mental health problems, poverty and violence.⁸⁰

What can strengthen initiatives to improve youth health?

There is no doubt that youth health and well-being need to be approached on multiple fronts, given the complex relationships between alcohol use, violence, and unsafe sexual behaviours.⁸¹

Programmes fostering warm and caring relationships and communication between caregivers and adolescents on sexual and other life issues can be a major protective factor for youth health.⁸² Initiatives that promote equitable intimate relationships, rather than male dominance, are another key protective factor for the health of both young women and men, as positive intimate relationships during youth entrench long-term, positive sexual relationships.⁸³

The Integrated School Health Policy promises, if well implemented, to provide a comprehensive, intersectoral package of health care counselling services for school-going youth. In addition, schools should create a safe social environment that supports good physical and mental health, and provides care and support for teaching and learning.

Facility-based health services with improved youth accessibility, staff attitudes and confidentiality are also required,⁸⁴ as are initiatives offering recreation and community-based services⁸⁵. Greater linkages between clinics and non-governmental programmes are needed, and innovative forms of health service delivery tailored to youth needs should be implemented and evaluated.

Integration of health care and social support services and stronger mechanisms for transitioning adolescents between school and adult public health services could improve youth health outcomes. Establishing out-of-facility health services such as those in case 7 should be a priority.

Effective initiatives to prevent violence amongst youth that also address risk factors at both individual and community level are needed. For example, the Violence Prevention Through Urban Upgrading programme in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, while its impact remains to be assessed, has adopted an integrated approach by: addressing the underlying causes of violence (and crime) through socio-economic development; re-arranging the physical environment to decrease the likelihood of violence and crime, and providing support to victims of violence.⁸⁶

Greater political action is needed to implement policies and plans and put in place the resources needed to address gender-based violence in particular. While government established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Violence Against Women and Children in 2012 and a Programme of Action⁸⁷ was published in 2014, concrete implementation of the proposed actions and monitoring and evaluation of its impact are required to assess its effectiveness.

Improved prevention strategies are also needed to discourage under-age drinking. This includes challenging current drinking norms and practices, and ensuring the buy-in and support of high school and community leaders.⁸⁸

Better access to drug rehabilitation services, as well as stronger linkages between alcohol and drug rehabilitation and mental health

sector programmes, are also needed. Mental health screening among youth should be prioritised, tailored for different female and male needs, and aligned with government plans for expanded school-based health services.⁸⁹

The National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020⁹⁰ includes a strong focus on health care and combating substance abuse, and recognises the need for a holistic approach. Key recommendations include:

- strengthening the district health system to ensure more equitable access to health care services and address barriers that inhibit young peoples' access to SRH services;
- a holistic approach to youth with a strong focus on physical exercise and provision of recreational facilities and the promotion of interpersonal and coping skills through the life orientation curriculum;
- a similar emphasis on building self-esteem and mutual respect to prevent violence and unsafe sex; and
- stricter enforcement of municipal by-laws to restrict access to alcohol.

Global recommendations to improve youth health similarly highlight the importance of engaging sectors beyond health in order to create safe schools and communities. The World Health Organization highlights the value of collecting strategic information on core youth health indicators to measure determinants, coverage and the impact of policies, programmes and services.⁹¹ In addition, the following key principles should inform the design and delivery of youth health initiatives:

- recognise the underlying social determinants of youth health including gender, economic status and geographic location;
- avoid conceptualising youth sexuality as only associated with risk and enhance youth's agency to choose healthy sexual behaviour;
- build youth capacity, involvement and leadership in integrated youth programme development and implementation;
- recognise the limitations of interventions aimed at shifting individual health behaviour and address changes needed in social contexts;
- mobilise communities to address gender inequality and promote youth health; and
- engage with young men to encourage equitable and safe relationships.

The health problems reviewed in this chapter share many common underlying interpersonal, social and economic causes such as peer pressure, lack of positive family or community role models, poverty, poor quality education and unemployment. This underscores the need for integrated and multi-pronged health strategies, including those focusing on mental health, to promote youth health and well-being.⁹²

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Parenting, poverty and young people in South Africa: What are the connections?

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This essay approaches “parenting”ⁱ as the caring interactions between close adult kin and young people. The practices, ideas and connections that comprise parenting evolve over time because they are dependent on the well-being of parents, that of adolescents and the health of the relationship between them. In this essay, we explore these ideas with regard to the parenting of adolescents under the particular conditions present in South Africa.

Children who have received appropriate nutrition from conception onwards, who are attached to their parents, and who have received cognitive stimulation and warm, positive parenting with consistent limit-setting, are more likely to succeed in their education;¹ are more likely to be healthy as adults;² and less likely to engage in risky sex,³ substance misuse⁴ and violent and criminal behaviour⁵. These are strands that run throughout the span of child development, from conception to adulthood, but adolescence entails new contexts for parenting as young people expand their social networks, diversify their occupations and experience rapid brain development that changes the way they think and engage with the world.⁶ Positive relationships with role models, access to social networks and to cultural capital become increasingly important as young people tread the difficult path between their aspirations and local realities. Shifts from earlier forms of parenting may occur both in the activities of parenting and associated expectations of both adults and their older children. However the evidence suggests that parenting remains critical to young people’s sense of belonging,⁷ constructions of their sexuality,⁸ their interface with wider society⁹ and to their emotional and physical safety¹⁰.

But poverty can make parenting a very difficult task, and parenting that is harsh and inconsistent can increase the risk that young people continue to live in poverty – because such parenting is more likely to lead to poor health and risk behaviours in children that will negatively affect their ability to perform well at school and find employment. In this essay, we examine the following questions:

- How does poverty affect parenting?
- What is the role of family structure?
- What about teen parenting?
- What is needed to support parents in South Africa?

How does poverty affect parenting?

Many parents in South Africa face considerable barriers in their efforts to fulfil the tasks of parenting. For instance, poverty increases the stress that parents experience when trying to provide for and protect their children, and makes emotionally distant, harsh and inconsistent parenting more likely.¹¹ Parents living in poverty are also likely to be poorly educated and thus less able to support their children’s educational development.¹² Poverty, by definition, also reduces the ability of parents to provide adequate nutrition and to access good educational opportunities for children, on the consistent basis necessary for healthy development.¹³ Poverty therefore can significantly undermine parenting, decrease the life chances of children, and thereby transmit poverty from one generation to the next.

What is the role of family structure?

Family structure – whether children live with both parents, one parent, or neither parent – can have marked influences on whether families are able to care adequately for their children. For instance, single parenting increases the risk for poor behavioural and educational outcomes for young people because single parents are more likely to be living in poverty and more likely to be stressed, and thus more likely to struggle with all the issues outlined above.¹⁴ Father absence also affects children’s outcomes: while most studies focus on the role of the mother in parenting, there is mounting evidence that engaged fathering has independent, positive effects on children’s behaviour.¹⁵ Family structure can thus play a significant role in whether families live in poverty, and/or are able to accomplish the tasks of parenting.

What do family structures look like in South Africa? Table 3 shows parenting status for teenagers (aged 13 – 19) and children (aged 12 and younger). While the overall patterns are similar, there are substantial differences between the early and teen years: Teenagers are in fact far less likely to live with their biological parents.

Fortunately these statistics do not give the full picture: an analysis of the General Household Survey indicates that most children who lived with only one biological parent, lived in households with other adults present: 83% of children who were not living with their parents had a living parent who was elsewhere;

ⁱ In this essay, the word “parenting” applies to both biological parents, and any caregiver who takes on a parenting role.

Table 3: Parenting status of teens and younger children, 2011ⁱⁱ

	Teenagers (aged 13 – 19) (%)	Children (0 – 12) (%)
Live with father	28.4	32.2
Father deceased	27.9	12.6
Father alive but not co-resident	43.6	55.2
Live with mother	59.0	71.8
Mother deceased	14.1	5.1
Mother alive but not co-resident	27.0	23.1

Source: Statistics South Africa (2012) *Census 2011. Statistical release (Revised) P0301.4*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

and the majority of orphans lived in households headed by adults (only 0.5% of children lived in households headed by children) – see *Demography of South Africa's children* on p. 102. Extended families can of course mitigate the stresses of fragmented families: For instance, father figures need not be biological fathers in order to achieve good outcomes in young people.¹⁶

Orphans, however, are more likely than other children to be living in poverty, less likely to access schooling, and less likely to be living with a parent – and these risks are greater for double orphans than for single orphans.¹⁷

As with any other family, parenting and the context of parenting appear to play a key role in orphans' vulnerability. For instance, children who lost one or both of their parents due to AIDS-related illnesses, or who are living with a parent who has AIDS, are more likely than other children (including those orphaned for other reasons) to be living in extreme poverty and to suffer physical and psychological abuse; in turn, poverty and abuse increase the risk for transactional sex in these young people.¹⁸

I want somewhere where people don't say "it's not your home." (Orphaned child)¹⁹

There are several reasons for the fragmentation of families in South Africa. These include labour migration, particularly from rural to urban areas, and low marriage rates, especially among African women, who are also less likely to live with their child's father if they are not married.²⁰ Poverty seems to underlie both of these: Adults migrate because they need employment, and men living in poverty are unable to pay *lobola* (the bride price) or *ukuhlawulela* ("damages" or restitution for children born outside of marriage).²¹ The AIDS pandemic also plays a key role: In 2000 in rural KwaZulu-Natal, deaths in the age group 15 – 60 were most likely from AIDS (48% of all adults), while injuries from violence or traffic crashes also played a big role (20% of men aged 15 – 44).²²

What about teen parenting?

Teenage pregnancy in South Africa is driven by many factors, such as:²³

- gender inequalities;
- gendered expectations of how teenage boys and girls should act;
- *ukuthwala* – the practice of abducting young girls and forcing them into marriage, often with the consent of their parents;
- sexual taboos (for girls) and sexual permissiveness (for boys);
- social and economic disadvantages such as poverty;
- poor access to contraceptives and termination of pregnancies (for girls);
- inaccurate and inconsistent contraceptive use (for both boys and girls);
- judgemental attitudes of many health care workers (to girls);
- high levels of gender-based violence (affecting girls);
- wanting to leave a legacy (for boys);
- wanting to keep a partner (for both boys and girls); and
- poor sex education (for both boys and girls).

But contrary to popular misperception, teen parenting has been steadily declining in South Africa: In 1984, 42% of children in South Africa were born to mothers under 20, but by 2008, this was only 30% (see figure 16 on the next page); additionally, most (95%) of births to teen mothers in 2008 were to those aged 17 or older, for whom the risks are lower.²⁴

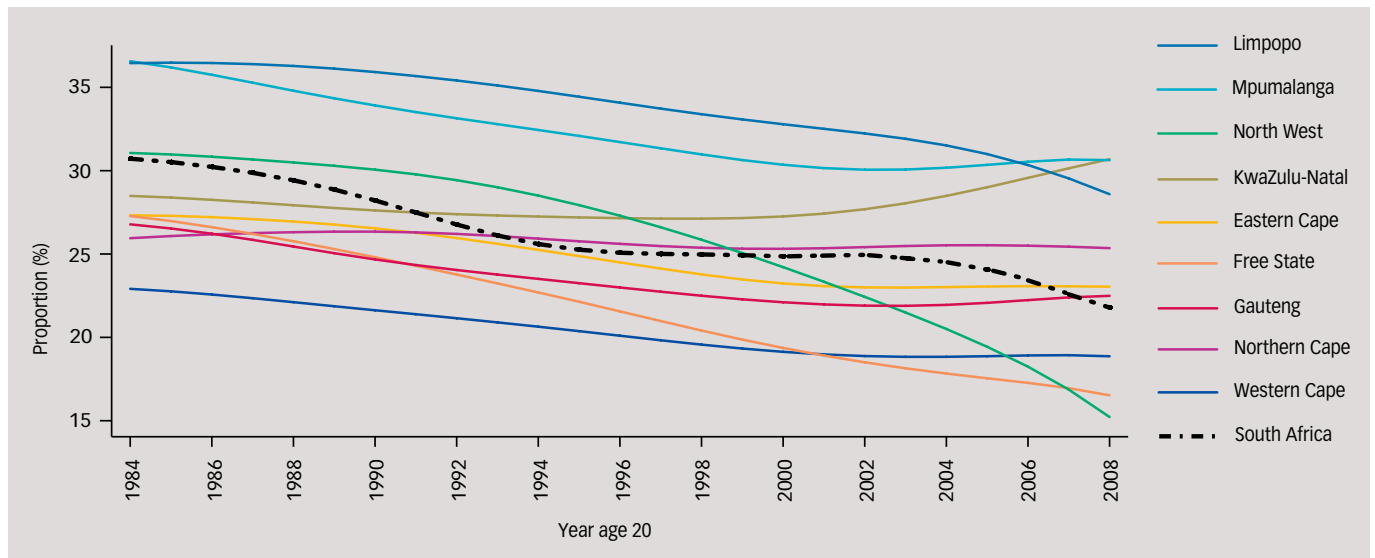
Teen parenthood, and particularly parenthood before the age of 17, can have serious consequences for mother, father and child,²⁵ as well as for grandparents. Consequences for the children of teen parents may include a higher likelihood of low birthweight (probably because pregnant teens are less likely to receive good antenatal care and more likely to be living in poverty, and therefore less likely to be able to access good antenatal nutrition),²⁶ followed by associated health, developmental and behavioural problems,²⁷ a higher likelihood of stunting, a sign of poor nutrition after birth,²⁸ and poor educational outcomes.²⁹

For the teen parents, and particularly the teen mother, consequences may include health problems; a higher likelihood of school drop-out;³⁰ increased risk of depression;³¹ and high risk of rapid repeat pregnancies, mainly due to inconsistent contraception; not being married; low levels of education; not going back to school after delivery; low educational aspirations; and weak parental relationships.³² Teen fathers also face multiple problems: increased risks of lower educational attainment; poorer employment outcomes; greater poverty; and higher criminality than other young men.³³ All of these can contribute to the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Teen parents face considerable difficulties in carrying out the parenting role. Teen fathers face significant barriers to achieving regular involvement, largely because they often cannot provide

ii See p. 100 in *Part 3: Children Count*, for a further analysis of children and youth living with their biological parents, drawing on data from the General Household Survey.

Figure 16: Proportion of women who gave birth by age 20, 1984 – 2008



Source: Ardington C, Branson N, Lam D, Leibbrandt M, Marteleto L, Menendez A, Mutevedzi T & Ranchhod V (2012) *Revisiting the 'Crisis' in Teen Births: What is the Impact of Teen Births on Young Mothers and their Children?* A SALDRU Policy Brief. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT.

Data sources: October Household Surveys 1994, 1995, 1998; General Household Survey 2002; National Income Dynamics Survey 2008. Analysis by Branson, Ardington and Leibbrandt.

materially for their children,³⁴ an aspect of parenting that also conveys emotional care³⁵.

It was a big shock. But a baby is a wonderful thing. I don't feel like a real father because I'm not working. I'm not supporting and that. A father's job is to support his family and I'm not doing that and that's what makes me feel a bit down. (18-year-old father, Coloured male, Bonteheuwel, Cape Town, 2008)³⁶

Many young fathers are not living with their children or are not in a socially recognised relationship with the child's mother. Several factors may lead to this situation:³⁷ the young mother's family is often not supportive of the involvement in their family of a young man whom they may perceive as being "irresponsible"; or his own family may consider him neither old enough nor prepared for such a role. Thus, even where the young man himself would like to be a father to his child, he may have little ability – financial, social or legal – to press for access to his child. In the face of such hurdles, young men may become fathers biologically but never see their children again.

I told myself that the baby is mine and I am going to take responsibility ... because the child was made by me and I told myself that whatever happens I'll be there. (20-year-old young father, Black male, Langa, 2008)³⁸

For young mothers, the push to complete their schooling may limit their ability to care for their child themselves.³⁹ Those who cannot complete their schooling may need to migrate elsewhere in search of employment to support themselves and their child, leaving the child in the care of their family or that of the father's.⁴⁰ Such situations make it difficult for young mothers to be involved in their children's lives.⁴¹ Also, research in the United Kingdom suggests

that teenage mothers are more likely to remain as single parents throughout their adult life. It tends to be more difficult for them to find and retain a partner, and they are more likely to partner with unemployment-prone and lower-earning men.⁴²

Despite these problems and barriers to parenting, young mothers and fathers are often very interested in parenting their child.⁴³ They are not necessarily the "deadbeat dads" and "feckless mothers" often portrayed in the press, nor are their children necessarily doomed. Informally, mentoring from their own parents and other family members, and a welcoming attitude from the family of a teen mother towards the father of her child, help teens to carry out parenting responsibilities well, alongside increasing their chances of furthering their own education and future prospects.⁴⁴ More formal supports may also improve outcomes, as they do for any parent. It is not a foregone conclusion that teen parenting dooms both generations to continue in poverty.

What is needed to support families in South Africa?

While parenting is indisputably key to young people's development, equally important is the support provided to families by the broader context in which they live. All families need some support, such as finances and access to health care and education, in order to fulfil the basic tasks of providing for children; some may benefit from more focused parenting support, such as parenting programmes.⁴⁵ South African policy makes provision for both, and is particularly driven by recent emphases on early child development and child protection.⁴⁶

Cash transfers were introduced in the 1990s as a means of reducing poverty in South Africa.⁴⁷ Such transfers include the Old Age Pension and Child Support, Foster Care, Care Dependency, and Disability Grants. The ability of such grants to reduce risks

for children and adolescents is exemplified in the recent finding that, in families where children received the Child Support Grant, adolescent girls were less likely to engage in transactional sex and in sex with men more than five years older than themselves (both risks for HIV infection).⁴⁸

The two policies containing provision for parenting support are the Children's Act⁴⁹ and the White Paper on Families⁵⁰. The latter focuses on strengthening families, with the promotion of responsible parenting as one of seven core principles. Although approved by Parliament, there are no instruments in place or funds dispensed to provinces to put these intentions into practice. Preceding the White Paper is a longer history of voluntary sector initiatives to enhance opportunities for youth that include reducing unwanted teen pregnancy and supporting young parents. For instance, loveLife operates Y-centres in 18 communities with very high HIV rates and purposively integrates health and education for youth within a broad spectrum of services including career guidance, information technology training, opportunities to develop leadership skills and the creation of a safe, supportive discussion space for tackling sensitive issues and setting personal goals.⁵¹

A much greater momentum exists around developing provision to fulfil the government's obligation under the Children's Act, although the focus has been largely on the early years and not on teenagers. There is good reason for this, as a good foundation in the early years improves the chances of success in the teenage years. However, preventing child maltreatment (a key focus of the Act) is critical in the teenage years, as is support for teen parents to manage their parenting role. The Act provides for the former, and services are at present provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), but coverage remains patchy. The Children's Act as well as other legislation that deals with youth matters (such as the new National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020)⁵² remain largely silent on the issue of teen parenting. Further, making adequate funding available for the provisions of the Children's Act is an urgent priority.⁵³

Parenting support may take the form of home-visiting services for at-risk parents (for instance, first-time, single or teen parents), or group-based parent training programmes. The intent of such programmes is to improve parent-child relationships, to reduce child maltreatment, and to improve parent skill in managing child behaviour without resorting to violence. Very few have been evaluated,⁵⁴ though the Sinovuyo Caring Families Programme for Parents and Teens (see case 9) aims to support parents and their adolescent children so that child maltreatment is reduced, and The Parent Centre (an NGO based in Cape Town) offers a teen parenting programme. Both these programmes are currently being evaluated and are not yet offered on a large scale.

But there are key gaps in South African family policy.

- First, poverty and labour migration are key factors in undermining families in South Africa. Any policy provisions that attempt to address these situations should take a family focus. For instance, a recent agreement among mining companies, unions and the government makes provision for converting

Case 9: The Sinovuyo Caring Families Programme for parents and teens

The Sinovuyo Caring Families Programme helps parents to develop warm, caring relationships with their teenagers and to use non-violent forms of discipline. The programme emphasises the development of good relationships between parents and teens, parents and teens being able to work together to keep the teen safe, and includes a component on family budgeting. Parents and teens meet weekly in small groups facilitated by a trained community worker, sometimes separately and sometimes together. Meeting together gives them an opportunity to practise the new relationship skills they have learned and to make family plans together. The programme has been through two preliminary tests in impoverished rural communities in the Eastern Cape, which have shown promising results: reductions in child abuse, more consistent discipline, better supervision, and positive and involved parenting; as well as reduced adolescent delinquency and aggression. It is now being tested, using a randomised controlled trial design.

The programme is being developed collaboratively by the Universities of Oxford and Cape Town, Clowns Without Borders South Africa, UNICEF, and the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers.

some mining hostels to family dwellings, which will allow families to remain together even if a parent is a mineworker.⁵⁵

- Second, more information is needed about the ways in which already existing, informal support can be strengthened (for example, to deal with the shortfalls around information, social inclusion, material resources or psychosocial well-being), and how support for parents is – or could be – conceived by parents themselves and wider family members, so that appropriate types of support can be enhanced through public services, or offered through new kinds of services.
- Third, there is too little emphasis on evaluating programmes and the roll out of such evidence-based programmes. This runs the risk that programmes may be ineffective, or worse, harmful.⁵⁶ Financial support for evaluations of existing and new programmes is a crucial element of policy provisions.
- Fourth, there is too little funding available for staffing such programmes, even if paraprofessionals are used rather than professionals. Government must prioritise the provision of financial resources to implement services mandated under the Children's Act.
- Fifth, even though teen pregnancy is a less critical issue than the media and even some government officials would suggest, rates could be reduced still further if attention is given to preventing teen pregnancy by improving the quality of sex education and the availability of contraception to adolescents.⁵⁷ Teens who become parents should be prioritised to ensure that

they access parenting programmes, antenatal care and proper nutrition. They should also get support through other channels such as peer education or mentorship through education, training, work or faith-based organisations. Schools should provide support so that they can continue their education during and after pregnancy. Education for teen mothers also requires access to quality, affordable child care; and their access to the Child Support Grant should be facilitated, even if they do not have identity documents as outlined in regulation 11(1) of the Social Assistance Act which provides for the use of alternative forms of identification.⁵⁸

In summary, then, supporting families to achieve good outcomes for young people is an issue that should engage every sector of society: all government departments, the private sector, civil society, as well as parents and young people themselves. Currently a great deal of work is going into developing evidence-based parenting programmes to prevent child maltreatment and improve young people's outcomes in South Africa – see, for instance, the Parenting for Lifelong Health suite of programmes,⁵⁹ as well as early child development programmes⁶⁰. What remains, now, is to continue understanding the evolving relationships between adolescents

and parents in diverse socio-economic and aspirational contexts, to develop the evidence base, to make effective programmes and supports widely accessible to parents – to find the funding for them, to prioritise young people's access to these services, and to find service delivery mechanisms that have wide reach and provide services without stigma to parents.

Achieving these goals will also depend on achieving sufficient levels of coordination between sectors and government departments. As we have seen, the challenges of parenting are multi-faceted across the age span, requiring access to health care, education, social services and economic development opportunities for both parent and child. The balance of these needs will shift over time as children mature and young people become parents themselves – and as social change shapes external demands on families and on individuals. It is therefore critical to develop ways to share lessons from existing programmes and to identify models of coordination that are best able to meet the needs of parents on a sustainable basis. These steps offer important opportunities to influence the health and well-being of South Africa's young people in this generation and those to come.

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Youth and mobility: Linking movement to opportunity

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The youth stage is characterised by a high degree of mobility. Some of this movement takes place within urban or rural areas, as young people move out of family homes. But migration from rural to urban areas is high, too: Young people leave rural areas in search of better employment or income-generating opportunities, better education, and access to health care, housing and welfare services. Mobility is not only about individual choice; it is related to broader livelihood strategies of households and family networks.

Yet, it is not always associated with improved life chances or improved youth well-being. Migrant youth from rural areas have a lower chance than urban-born youth of finding employment in urban areas,¹ and “endemic unemployment is likely to enhance feelings of social disillusionment, frustration and boredom”,² possibly leading to an increase in risk behaviour or return migration to places with little opportunity for young people. Large numbers of young people live in the informal settlements on the peripheries of the cities and face high levels of food insecurity.³ Many will remain in this “informal state” with dire consequences for their well-being and that of their children. What starts as a livelihood strategy may increase vulnerability.

Migration and mobility are under-researched issues in South Africa, and very little is known about youth mobility in particular. In the absence of a strong body of empirical work, this essay provides some preliminary analysis and considers the following questions:

- Why should we be interested in youth mobility?
- What do we know about patterns of youth mobility?
- What are the main drivers of migration among young people?
- What does mobility mean for the lives and life chances of young people?
- How might youth mobility affect the lives of children and extended families?
- What are the recommendations?

This set of questions also serves as a list of issues that need further investigation. A more solid evidence base would be useful for planning services and interventions for young people on the move, and for those who are prevented from moving by poverty and other structural constraints.

Why should we be interested in youth mobility?

For purposes of this essay, we define migration as a temporary or permanent movement across place, either within or between provinces. Mobility is a broader concept, and includes moves between households or areas within the same place or district as well as migration. Very little is known about youth migration and mobility in South Africa. Later in this essay we attempt to piece together some of the existing evidence. We start by outlining the historical context and some of what is known about contemporary patterns of migration, as these dynamics are likely to be relevant to the movement of young people, too.

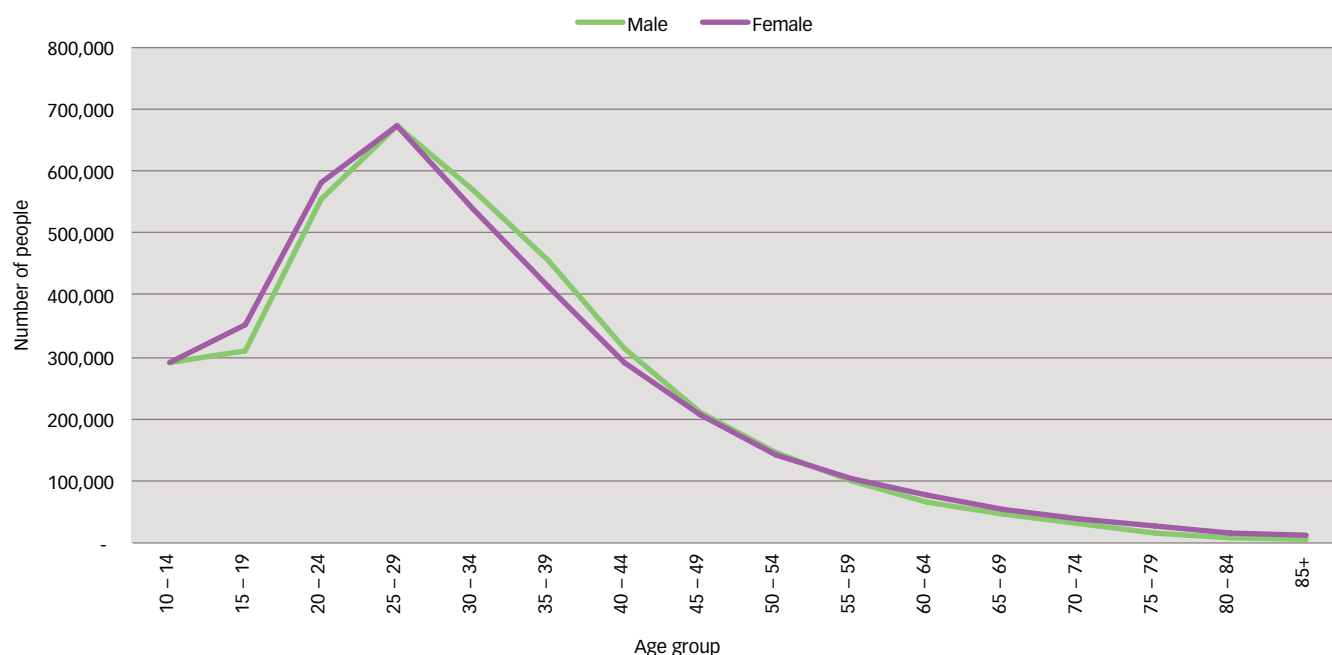
Under apartheid, population movement was restricted through an elaborate system of pass laws and taxes that enabled men to migrate from the rural areas to the cities to work, but made it very difficult for their families to join them. These patterns of labour migration frequently took a circular, or “oscillating” form, where urban migrants would return regularly to a rural family home. Despite the lifting of restrictions on population movement towards the end of apartheid, urban and rural nodes remain interlinked through migration and relationships of dependence at the household level. The reasons for this are complex and not thoroughly understood, but the existing evidence suggests that households adopt diverse livelihood strategies in the context of housing and employment shortages.

Women's migration has increased since the end of apartheid. This may be related to improved work opportunities for women, and the fact that women increasingly carry financial as well as child care responsibilities as marriage and cohabitation rates continue to decline. Much of the existing literature on migration in South Africa presents migration rates for the general population, or for people above the age of 15 because of a focus on labour migration. The 2011 Census recorded net out-flows of people from the Eastern and Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, while the highest in-flows were in the Western Cape and Gauteng.⁷

There has been surprisingly little analysis of migration patterns from the 2011 Census given the importance of migration in understanding South Africa's demography. A detailed analysis of the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS),ⁱ the first nationally representative panel study in South Africa, found that in general, movers tend to be younger and better educated than non-movers.⁸

ⁱ More detailed information on young movers can be obtained from NIDS. This is a panel study which started with a nationally representative baseline of 7,305 households (over 28,000 individuals) in 2008, and has subsequently followed up each individual in the panel every two years, even if they moved to a different household or province.

Figure 17: Number of people who moved municipality in the past 10 years, by age group and sex, 2011



Source: Statistics South Africa (2012) *Census 2011. Statistical release P0301.4*. Pretoria: Stats SA. [10% sample, weighted]
Calculations by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

In the remainder of this essay we start to examine the dynamics of mobility for young people aged 15 – 24 years.

What do we know about patterns of youth mobility?

The social and political controls under apartheid “worked against youth moving independently from their homes, and youth migration was generally concealed within married household migration or labour migration”.⁹ Recent studies suggest that youth migration rates have increased, and that youth “now migrate on their own in significant numbers. Much of this migration is intra-urban, and youth and unmarried adults move on different circuits from married people and established couples”.¹⁰

At the time of the 2011 Census, 20% of all males and 18% of all females were reported to have moved across municipal boundaries during the preceding 10 years. Young people are especially mobile: Figure 17 shows that migration increases sharply amongst youth in their late teens and peaks amongst those in their late 20s. These migration rates include all directions of migration: from rural to urban areas and vice versa, as well as moves within urban and within rural areas – provided they are moves across municipal boundaries.

An analysis of data across the first three waves of NIDS (2008 – 2012) differentiates between young people who moved household and those who did not move. The moves were not necessarily across municipal boundaries. The results therefore reflect patterns of youth mobility, rather than migration, and show that the highest rates of youth mobility occur in the Eastern Cape, Free State and Limpopo provinces. Table 4 shows the proportion of movers and stayers aged 15 – 24.

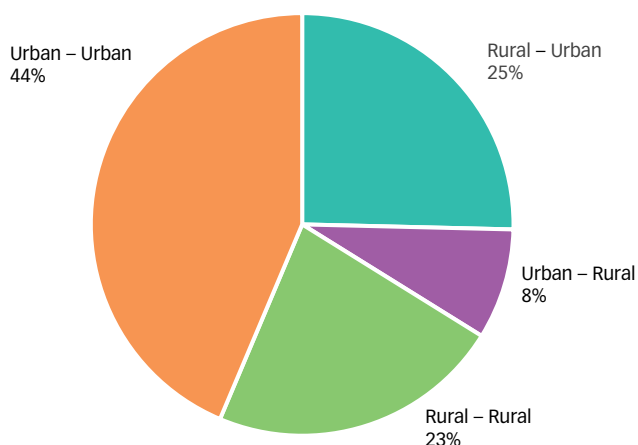
Table 4: Percentage of young movers and stayers (age 15 – 24), by province

Province	Movers (%)	Stayers (%)	Total (%)
Eastern Cape	27	73	100
Free State	29	71	100
Gauteng	19	81	100
KwaZulu-Natal	14	86	100
Limpopo	26	74	100
Mpumalanga	14	86	100
North West	16	84	100
Northern Cape	20	80	100
Western Cape	15	85	100
South Africa	20	80	100

Source: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2008; 2012) *National Income Dynamics Study 2008, Wave 1; National Income Dynamics Study 2012, Wave 3*. (panel weights used). Calculations by Amina Ebrahim, SALDRU, UCT.

Figure 18 provides a breakdown of the direction of mobility among young people aged 15 – 24 years between 2008 and 2012. Almost half of the recorded moves were from one urban place to another urban place (this includes moves within the same city, and moves between different urban areas). A quarter of young movers had moved from rural to urban areas, and 20% had moved from one rural place to another.

Figure 18: Direction of movement among young movers, 2008 – 2012



Source: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2008; 2012) *National Income Dynamics Study 2008, Wave 1; National Income Dynamics Study 2012, Wave 3* (panel weights used). Calculations by Amina Ebrahim, SALDRU, UCT.

Of all the recorded moves made by young people in the 15 – 24 age group, 25% are moves within a 5-kilometre radius of the original household, while 33% are moves of over 100 kilometres, and 10% are over 500 kilometres. The panel study only records movement *within* South Africa – not cross-border migration (even though some of those who move may be foreign nationals already resident in South Africa in the first wave). Table 5 shows that the majority of youth movement takes place *within* each province, except for the Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces.

Of the young Limpopo residents who moved between 2008 and 2012, 46% moved to Gauteng. Of the Eastern Cape youth who moved, 52% moved to a different location within the Eastern Cape, while 48% moved to other provinces. Similarly, most youth moves are over short distances (table 6).

Table 6: Youth mobility by distance of move, 2008 – 2012

Distance of move	Percentage
5km or less	25
Between 5 and 100km	32
Between 100 and 500km	33
More than 500km	10

Source: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2008; 2012) *National Income Dynamics Study 2008, Wave 1; National Income Dynamics Study 2012, Wave 3* (Panel weights used). Calculations by Amina Ebrahim, SALDRU, UCT.

Mobility rates vary for different population groups. Among White youth, 37% had moved in the five-year period (2008 – 2012), compared with 20% of African and 12% of Coloured youth. The race shares of young movers are shown in figure 19 on the next page. Given differences in population sizes, the majority (85%) of young movers are African.

Rural-to-urban mobility rates are similar for young men and women, while women are more likely than men to move within urban areas. Reverse migration rates, from urban to rural areas, are slightly higher for young men than young women.

What are the main drivers of migration among young people?

There has been little research into the specific drivers of youth mobility. What little we know is derived largely from the Demographic and Health Surveillance sites in Hlabisa (KwaZulu-Natal) and Agincourt (Mpumalanga), and focuses specifically on migration. It seems that drivers of migration can be broadly divided into two types: permanent and temporary forms of migration.

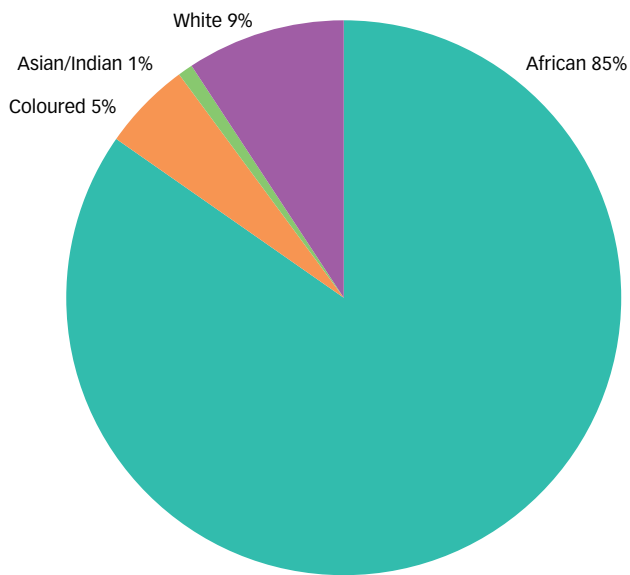
The main drivers of temporary youth migration are education (including further education) and strategies to enter the labour market. Statistics South Africa reported that, of the young people

Table 5: Percentage of youth moving within and between provinces, 2008 – 2012

Wave 3 (2012)										
	Province	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape
Wave 1 (2008)	Eastern Cape	52	0	12	14	0	0	4	0	18
	Free State	3	70	20	0	3	0	3	0	0
	Gauteng	0	0	90	6	0	0	0	0	4
	KwaZulu-Natal	1	1	15	83	0	0	0	0	0
	Limpopo	0	0	46	0	50	3	2	0	0
	Mpumalanga	0	1	20	3	3	70	3	0	0
	North West	0	4	24	0	0	0	61	5	7
	Northern Cape	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	89	3
	Western Cape	11	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	76

Source: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2008; 2012) *National Income Dynamics Study 2008, Wave 1; National Income Dynamics Study 2012, Wave 3* (panel weights used). Calculations by Amina Ebrahim, SALDRU, UCT.

Figure 19: Youth mobility by race, 2008 – 2012



Source: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2008; 2012) *National Income Dynamics Study 2008, Wave 1; National Income Dynamics Study 2012, Wave 3* (panel weights used). Calculations by Amina Ebrahim, SALDRU, UCT.

aged 15 – 34 who migrated out of Agincourt, 50% of females and 73% of males migrated for work (or work-seeking) purposes, while 22% of females and 11% of males moved for schooling or study purposes.¹¹ In another Agincourt study, both of these reasons (schooling and employment) were associated with temporary migration, which was the most common form of migration.

Permanent migration was associated with marriage, separation, and moving families from rural villages to access better services. Permanent migration was less common than temporary migration, and the gender profile of young migrants was different: women were more likely than men to be permanent migrants, while temporary migration rates were higher for males than for females.¹²

A study on youth mobility in the Eastern Cape found that youth and their parents saw migration as a pathway out of rural poverty and to upward social mobility:¹³

Here in Bolani, there are no schools, no roads and no transport and clinics ... so I don't see myself staying for long. (Secondary school girl, 16, Bolani, Eastern Cape)

Many young people are running away ... I wouldn't encourage them to stay because there is no future here. (Mother of four, Bolani, Eastern Cape)

Metropolitan areas are the major centres of employment in South Africa. Between 1996 and 2012, employment increased by 50% in the metropolitan centres, compared to 20% in smaller cities.¹⁴ As a result, many young people move from various parts of the country to the metropolitan areas, with most going to Gauteng, followed by the Western Cape.¹⁵ Young people with a profession or skill have a higher probability than unskilled youth of migrating to the cities.

However, not all population movement is towards places of economic growth: There are also significant movements into small

towns and rural areas.¹⁶ This may be because employment-related migration is driven by the hope of employment, rather than the actual prospect of a job. Employment opportunities are increasingly limited to skilled rather than unskilled work.¹⁷ The overwhelming majority of new city migrants have a low skills base (even if they have matric). Failure to find employment, coupled with the high cost of living in cities, is therefore likely to be one of the drivers of sequential migration across urban areas, or reverse migration from cities to rural areas (see Thandiswa's story in case 10).

Previous studies found that the unemployed attach themselves to households where some economic support exists. In many cases this means moving back to rural homes, where the cost of living is relatively low and where family support is available. Reverse migration is also attributed to illness. HIV/AIDS has been called a "disease of mobility": Migrants who fall sick in the cities return to their rural home to be cared for, or until they die. Others return after having contracted occupation-related illnesses like lung infections from working on the mines.

The various drivers and processes of return migration imply an enormous financial and care burden for the receiving rural households, particularly in a context where remittances (or financial support) from urban migrants appear to be declining. It is in this context that social grants play an important role. Large numbers of elderly people and children live in rural areas, and these are the primary beneficiaries of most social grants. Not only can grants help households to support the sick and unemployed, they also enable migration. Existing analyses of the relationship between grant receipt and labour migration have focused either on the effects of the Old Age Pension or on grants generally, but without differentiating the effects of different social grants. The Child Support Grant is much smaller in value than the pension (R330 compared to R1,410 per month in 2015), and so is less likely to support the migration efforts of household members.

Researchers refer to the "spatial mismatch" between where unemployed people live and where possible jobs are, pointing out that the sheer distance involved means that labour migration may be unaffordable. Social grants offset this, and so can be seen as a driver or enabler of migration. The likelihood of migration among young men increases when they are co-resident with someone who is eligible for an Old Age Pension (i.e. over 60 years), and this effect is more pronounced for young men who have completed matric.²³

What does mobility mean for the lives and life chances of young people?

Mobility and migration decisions are often part of broader household strategies, based on an evaluation of the balance between "push" and "pull" factors. Spatial mobility (moving place) often starts with the desire for upward social mobility: the wish for better education and employment opportunities. Research indicates, however, that moving does not automatically produce these benefits.²⁴

Temporary migration of household members can be a successful livelihood strategy for rural families,²⁵ but it has also been found

Case 10: Thandiswa's story – Mobility in search of opportunity and stability

Thandiswa (not her real name) was 28 when we first met her. She was living in her mother's house in Khayelitsha, with 10 other family members, one of whom her own son. Her second son lived with her elder sister in the Eastern Cape. She had decided it was better for him to be there, as he had a skin condition that worsened in the harsh, dusty environment of the township.

Thandiswa's family had moved from the Ciskei (one of the former homelands) to the Western Cape in the 1980s, at a time when such movement was still illegal and potentially placed the family in great danger. They moved in search of work: There were not enough opportunities for employment in the Ciskei, no means of getting an income that would allow the parents to take care of themselves and their children. They entered Cape Town first via a farm in Kuilsrivier, where Thandiswa's father found work as a labourer. Later they moved into the informal settlement of Crossroads, and a few years later into a house in Khayelitsha. Thandiswa's schooling was frequently interrupted as she moved from one township school to another. She wrote and passed her matric exams but her marks were not high enough for her to enter tertiary education.

After matric, the family asked her to return to the former Ciskei to herd the cattle, the only asset the family had managed

to accumulate. When she returned to Cape Town seven years later she was unable to find a job. Though she would have been described as a "discouraged job seeker" at the start of our study, we noticed her making numerous attempts to search for work, further education, and some sense of independence. She held a short-term job in Cape Town and also moved to Pretoria to take on a short-term position in a shop that she had been told about by one of her neighbours.

At the beginning of 2013, she had moved back to the Eastern Cape to live with her sister in an RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme] housing area in Seymour – a town that was once an economic centre with a working tobacco factory, hotel and citrus farms, but that hotel was now a shebeen, the factory a ruin, and most of the farms deserted. The closest town was Fort Beaufort, about 34 kilometres away. The days in Seymour were monotonous – another young woman described to us how all she would do was sit outside the house on a chair "just following the sun", as there was nothing else to do. But Thandiswa and her sister assured us life was better there than in crime-ridden and overcrowded Khayelitsha. Both sons were now living with Thandiswa and she was glad that she could provide them with a safer environment.

Source: Fieldnotes prepared for: Newman K & De Lannoy A (2014) *After Freedom, the Rise of a Post-apartheid Generation in Democratic South Africa*. Boston, US: Beacon Press.

that urban migrants need to spend more time looking for jobs than with those who were born and grew up in the city, even when controlling for different ages and education levels. When migrants finally do obtain employment, they are less able than non-migrants to continue to improve their jobs: "they don't move up the career ladder, they don't change occupations".²⁶ Census data further indicate that the majority of migrants from the Eastern to the Western Cape who do find employment are involved in elementary and low-paying occupations: street vendors, domestic workers, building caretakers, farm and fishery staff, and construction, manufacturing and transport labourers.

Patterns of social development, economic growth and the provision of services in the cities also raise other, complex problems for young city dwellers. In cities and towns that are on the receiving end of large numbers of in-migrating youth, the infrastructure may not be able to accommodate the continuous inflow of people, resulting in escalating deprivation: "When young people leave home to migrate to another place, the new households that result are both smaller and more insecure than the parent households. This phenomenon drives down the average size of the South African household, and also raises the risk of spreading poverty. What distinguishes youth migration is its temporary and unstable character. ... Much... migration appears to be into shack accommodation, from where the new smaller families that result are likely to find no feasible way out again".²⁷

Amongst youth aged 15 – 24, the proportion living in urban areas increases with age, while the rural share of the population decreases (shown in figure 20 on the next page). There is also a small but significant increase in the likelihood of living in informal areas as youth get older.

The majority of the urban poor, including most in-migrants, live in formal townships or informal settlements that are far from the city and from most employment opportunities and information hubs. Transport is often unreliable, dangerous and expensive, rendering job search all the more difficult. Life in informal settlements, with its limited access to sanitation, high impact of adverse weather conditions, often high levels of substance abuse and violence, also impacts negatively on physical and emotional well-being.²⁸

These challenges make young migrants very vulnerable, both to exploitation and to increased risk behaviour.²⁹

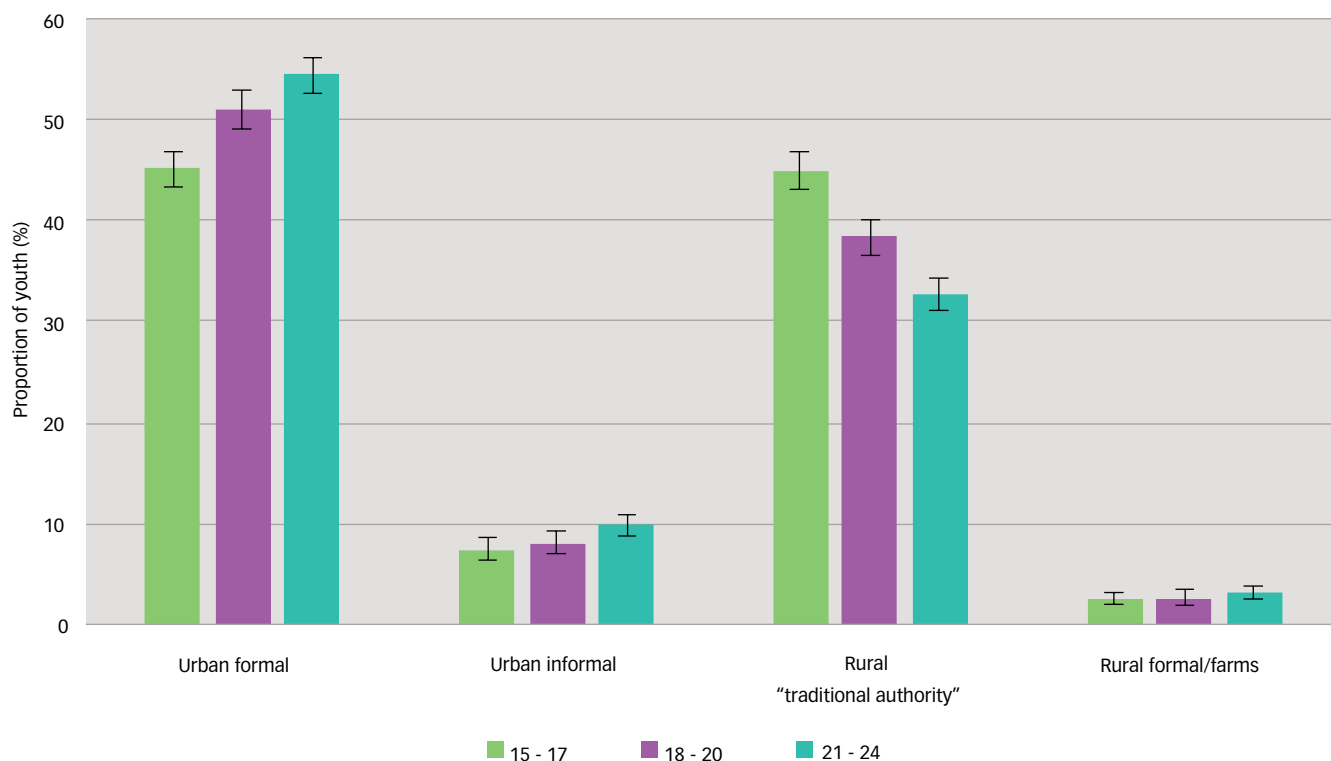
How might youth mobility affect the lives of children and extended families?

Patterns of population movement lead to a higher concentration of youth in some areas of the country while other areas become devoid of youth, leaving behind a larger proportion of younger children and older people. The effects of these dynamics on extended families and communities are not well understood.

The relationship between mothering and migration also needs further investigation. On the one hand, having children may

Figure 20: Type of residential area by youth age group, 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 60%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. [person weights used]. Calculations by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

discourage women from migrating: "Moving from a rural village to a city may be a necessary strategy to improve employment opportunities, but can further marginalise women and their children by removing them from established chains of care. A lack of child care options can in turn limit the caregiver's freedom to seek work and earn income."³⁰ On the other hand, the existence of substitute caregivers (such as grandmothers) at the home of origin is associated with higher rates of female migration.³¹ Research is currently underway to investigate the relationship between adult female labour migration and patterns of child mobility.³²

Migration patterns may result in a widening physical and social distance between generations and potentially therefore a further loss of "social cohesion" and sense of belonging. Research on mobility shows, however, that the increased accessibility and use of mobile phone technology has become a vital communication tool between parents and their children.³³

Migration studies over many decades have described patterns of circular or oscillating migration.³⁴ However, analyses from the post-apartheid period have not conclusively established the extent to which circular migration persists. In particular, there is a lack of evidence about the dynamics of youth migration and whether young in-migrants keep contact with their places of origin, sending remittances back to their families in the rural areas.

Although remittances have declined overall as a share of household income, they remain an importance income stream for rural households: In 2010 – 2011, the National Income

Dynamics data showed that remittances contribute to 35% of rural households' income. The contribution of remittances to the rural economy is more than that of social assistance. The increase in the number of women who move to cities has been associated with a more regular flow of remittances to rural areas, and women are more likely to send remittances on a more regular basis than men.³⁵

What are the recommendations?

This essay has attempted to draw together some of the available evidence on youth mobility, but it is clear that this is a very under-researched issue. In the absence of a solid evidence base it is hard to make clear recommendations for intervention or policy response. It is even difficult to clearly differentiate the positive and negative drivers and outcomes of migration and mobility: Youth mobility may in some cases signify risk and vulnerability, while in others it may be a sign of social mobility and improved opportunity – in which case failure to move may be understood to be a form of vulnerability. Researchers on migration have commented: "What may not always be understood and appreciated is the fact that migration and urbanisation are processes that offer hope for the future."³⁶

In light of the patchy and diverse evidence on patterns and outcomes of youth mobility, we offer the following tentative recommendations:

Undertake further research on youth migration and urbanisation

From a policy perspective, there is a need for an expanded and rigorous evidence base on patterns, predictors and outcomes of youth migration, so that these dynamics can be considered in urban planning processes. "Urbanisation is widely regarded as inevitable and in many ways desirable. Cities need improved models of planning and service delivery so that future generations have better opportunities. Without appropriately informed planning that provides for growing populations, urbanisation could exacerbate inequality, trap young people in poverty at either the urban or rural end, and perpetuate intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality."³⁷

Consider scaling up social housing options

In the absence of affordable and adequate urban housing opportunities, many migrants remain trapped in insecure tenure arrangements and risky environments on the periphery of cities. These are also environments which are not conducive to the establishment of families or raising children. Low-cost housing backlogs and notoriously long waiting lists make RDP housing a virtually impossible option for young in-migrants to cities, especially as the eligibility criteria are oriented to those who are married or in permanent partnerships, or already have children living with them.³⁸ It is worth revisiting the idea of scaling up social housing and subsidised rental housing for young urban migrants, and particularly those who wish to start families or already have children living elsewhere.

Invest in youth-friendly cities

Cities need to be re-imagined as places where young people have opportunities to get ahead. UN Habitat and others have promoted the idea of child- and youth-friendly cities: Cities that support all aspects of a young person's development, including "self-efficacy, education, recreation, the experience of cultural harmony and a sense of connection to urban environments."³⁹ Being youth-friendly includes an increased focus on civic participation among youth, increased digital access, easy and affordable transport within

the city, access to education and employment. These are general aspirations to which the government – and society – has committed itself. Using the lens of "youth", regular and reliable information about the situation of young people, including new urban migrants, may help in identifying critical areas and prioritising the delivery of services and interventions.

Improve services, social infrastructure and access to information

Informal housing dwellers of all ages have expressed the need for improved delivery and maintenance of basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, storm-water drainage) and more frequent refuse removal. However, residents also refer to the need for better and more social services that would allow them to access information about resources, programmes and other opportunities for growth and advancement, which would enhance their social and cultural capital. Community centres or cultural centres, where various services to residents could be clustered, would help. These could take the form of the "Lighthouses of Knowledge" such as those built in Curitiba, Brazil, and "citizenship streets" which, allocated next to transportation nodes, can provide access to a range of local government services.⁴⁰

Develop a comprehensive social security programme

Often, migration is not only an individual decision, but a household strategy. The fact that many young migrants are sent to cities to provide income to remote rural households means that, for those lucky enough to find work, a substantial proportion of money is sent elsewhere. This is the model on which the apartheid system relied. In the absence of rural employment opportunities, it will be important to continue considering the development of a comprehensive social security programme. Social grants are currently targeted to those who are too young, too old or too disabled to work. Social assistance for the chronically unemployed would alleviate the burden on a younger generation struggling to enter the city and the labour market, and increase their chances of breaking poverty traps for themselves and their children.

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Youth identity, belonging and citizenship: Strengthening our democratic future

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Young people in South Africa today have to contend with a brutal past,¹ and an uncertain future characterised by persistent poverty, inequality and violence. Both impact on their sense of belonging – their feeling part of a promised dream of freedom, having a valued identity to celebrate, and being afforded the opportunity to transition successfully into independent adulthood.

At the same time, young people are described, in national discourses, either as a “ticking time-bomb” frustrated by the state’s repeated failures to provide young people with desirable prospects,² or as “an opportunity”, since healthy, educated and employed young people could – due to their sheer numbers – offer South Africa a way out of adversity and into prosperity.

This essay explores youth identity, belonging and citizenship in South Africa, and is structured around four questions:

- How do young people exercise agency and craft their identities?
- Where do young people experience or seek belonging?
- How does belonging affect political engagement, citizenship and social cohesion?
- What is needed to enable a greater sense of belonging and self-determination?

In exploring these questions, we do not claim that youth is a singular identity. Young people’s experiences of identity, belonging and citizenship are inextricably shaped by race, class, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs and other socio-structural factors.³ Previous essays have clearly illustrated the vulnerabilities of young people’s lives. They suffer “wounded attachments”⁴ to the past, and multiple exclusions⁵ from the future. In this context young people’s senses of identity, belonging and citizenship are formed, based upon:⁶

1. Personal agency and a sense of ownership; that is, the ability to exercise some form of control over one’s financial, emotional and social circumstances;⁷
2. Structural support and appropriate bridging relationships⁸ that connect individuals to families, peer groups, communities, and more formal institutions such as schools and the labour market; and
3. Identity-affirming rituals or traditions (such as circumcision, matriculating from school or obtaining a first job) that mark important milestones in life, build confidence, and offer opportunities for personal growth and performance⁹.

These conditions matter for all individuals, but may be particularly important for young people as they transition into adulthood.

Where these conditions are present and enabling, young people are able to form secure attachments and a positive self-identity, which, in turn, facilitate healthy interpersonal relationships and productive participation in economic and educational domains. Conversely, where such conditions are absent, or disabling, notions of belonging, identity and citizenship are likely to be weak. Young people who are excluded from social, economic and emotional opportunities find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, and transmit this status, both materially and emotionally, to their children.

How do young people exercise agency and craft their identities?

The pre-conditions for a sense of belonging are largely absent in the rainbow nation. Mass structural unemployment, high rates of interpersonal violence, and fractured families and communities limit opportunities for young people to exercise personal agency and demonstrate their abilities in a positive self-affirming manner. More than half of the young people aged 18 – 24 are outside both the formal schooling system and the labour market, and live below a poverty line of R604 per month.¹⁰ This persistent poverty and inequality prevents the realisation of full citizenship for young people in particular.¹¹ As a result, South Africa’s youth are often seen as a problem needing to be solved. The negative stereotypes about youth, coupled with conservative adult views about young people’s abilities and contribution to society, may further undermine young people’s participation and feelings of inclusion.¹² These experiences are reflected in Tshekiso’s story (see case 11 on p. 87).

One particularly persistent stereotype of young people born after 1994 is one that characterises them as “born free”: they are supposedly born into better material, political and social conditions and the pathways to upward mobility are considered wide open to them. Yet, in reality, this new generation continues to experience the legacies of apartheid and stark physical and material deficits speak to “continuity rather than sharp generational change”.¹³ This is reflected in evidence on citizenship and political culture from the Afrobarometer surveys, which show no significant difference in the attitudes and behaviours of youth relative to older cohorts.¹⁴

As a response to these contradictions of post-apartheid South Africa, young people may seek new ways to express their identities and assert themselves *ikasi style*:¹⁵ for some, that is in ways considered to be anti-social, including substance abuse, violence, and hyper-consumerism. Yet, at the same time, young people

remain remarkably optimistic about their prospects for upward mobility, and seemingly unable to acknowledge the structural violence¹⁶ they experience on a daily basis. The contradiction between these high hopes and harsh barriers results in the “quiet violence of dreams” for many of South Africa’s youth.¹⁷

Where do young people experience or seek belonging?

Structural support and appropriate bridging relationships are critical in helping young people develop a sense of belonging; yet these are consistently undermined for young people today. A family is the first site of belonging for most individuals – an institution that potentially supports secure attachment and positive self-identity. However, with high rates of orphanhood and physically absent parents, many young people may experience a lack of belonging in the early years. As shown in the essay on p. 69, only 35% of children under the age of 18 live with both parents.¹⁸ The rest live mostly with their mothers only, while relatively few live with their fathers or extended family members. The disruption of family care, especially at a young age, has important psychosocial effects. For example, children without secure attachment are more prone to behavioural problems such as aggression, learning difficulties, poor language development and weak decision-making abilities, and are less resilient to poverty.¹⁹ These, in turn, affect prospects for social mobility later on.

Boys, in particular, tend to under-perform at school, and are less likely to overcome this educational disadvantage later in life and progress in their chosen career paths. The disruption of family care also undermines the role that traditional rituals (such as circumcision) and other family-based events (holidays, religious events, birthdays) might play in identity formation. When the family disintegrates, young people may leave the home, living either permanently or temporarily on the streets, which increases their exposure to criminal activities.

Thus, young people are often left to create their own spaces for expressing their identity and to forge their own meanings of belonging. Without guidance and with time on their hands, they will invent their own rites of passage and seek out role models who may provide bridging relationships.²⁰ Typical positive trajectories would include participation in sport or cultural activities, civic life (such as volunteer organisations), and even political organisations.ⁱ Conversely, young people may seek out negative role models and join gangs that, through their hierarchical structure, strong identity and access to resources may serve young people’s need for structure, connection, protection, excitement and access to material resources.²¹

These trajectories will, in turn, affect the formation and structure of the next generation of families, as the lack of strong attachment and identity is transferred from parent to child in the context of material deprivation (see parenting essay on p. 69). In addition, the disconnection of the majority of youth from social

institutions such as labour markets, educational opportunities and even cultural heritage means that many of the “traditional” rituals that signal the transition to adulthood are absent, for example, successful matriculation or entering the labour force and finding a first job. Moreover, in the face of severe competition for scarce opportunities, incentives and opportunities for youth may have been taken by adults.²²

Despite these stark economic and social challenges, more recent studies argue that South Africa’s youth display a remarkable sense of optimism and independence, and a deep desire to assert their agency in order to escape their dire material circumstances.²³ However, in the absence of opportunities to participate fully as active citizens, this may manifest as a tendency towards individualism and consumerism where youth seek satisfaction through the consumption of “demonstrable” goods: what you wear, listen to, and know about through money.²⁴ This is most vividly demonstrated through *l’kothane*ⁱⁱ, but is also evident in the way that youth creatively use and adapt new forms of media, such as Facebook and Twitter, to construct their identities.²⁵

The various ways in which youth consume and use digital technologies such as mobile phones (p. 12) speak to questions of identity and power. When youth are recognised as the inheritors of a fast-approaching future, it gives them a sense of identity and purpose as responsible citizens. Conversely, in a free-market economy, youth may simply be reduced to consumers of material goods where an interest in political life gives way to the politics of consumption.²⁶ Here youth who are often unemployed or underemployed start to experience anxiety, frustration, loneliness, despair and depression, and hyper-individualism, all of which relate to a breakdown in support networks and social relations.²⁷

How does belonging affect political engagement, citizenship and social cohesion?

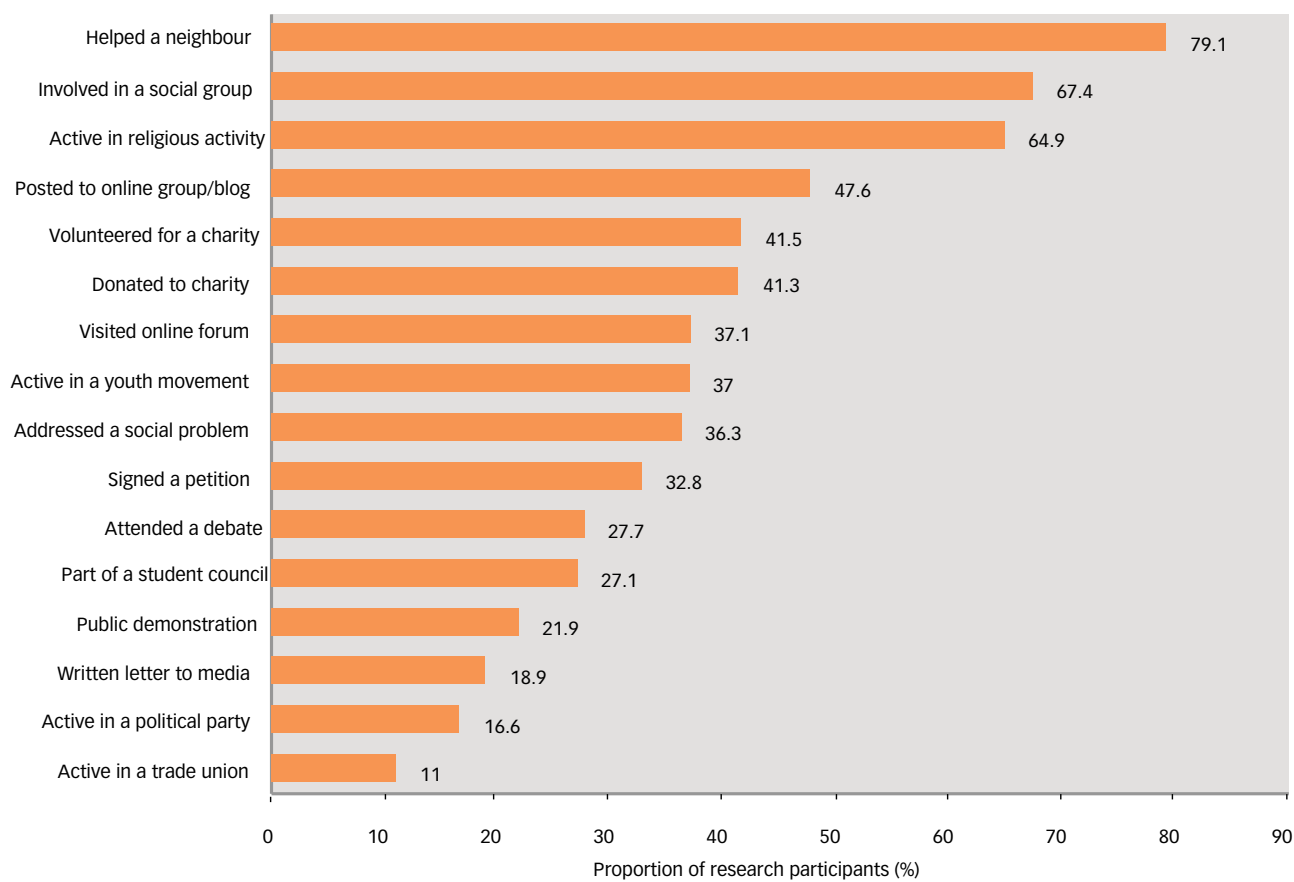
The colonial and apartheid eras were obsessed with racial classification and exclusion, while the post-apartheid state has used the concept of a “rainbow nation” to promote social cohesion and a common South African identity. Yet for many young people, the rainbow nation is neither an aspiration nor a reality. Studies of the “Born Frees” have pointed at their alienation from democratic culture.²⁸ This is characterised by low levels of participation in democratic institutions, low voter turnout and low levels of interest in political activities or topics.²⁹ Considerably fewer than 60% of eligible 18 – 29-year-olds registered to vote in 2014, a registration rate far lower than for older cohorts.³⁰ Moreover, amongst the youngest cohort aged 18 – 19, only a third of eligible voters registered.ⁱⁱⁱ This lack of participation is echoed in their reportedly low levels of trust in politicians, political parties and local government.³¹

Yet, even here there is an apparent contradiction. The Afrobarometer suggests that youth are as likely to embrace a

i Student mobilisation, organisation and politicisation at the University of Cape Town under the banner of the “Rhodes Must Fall” movement is a case in point.

ii *l’kothane* is a youth subculture characterised by the visible and often excessive consumption of expensive clothing and other consumer goods, followed by the very public and deliberate destruction of these goods in performances known as “battles”.

Figure 21: Civic engagement amongst youth (18 – 29 years), 2012



Source: Malila V (2013) A Baseline Study of Youth Identity, the Media and the Public Sphere in South Africa. School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University. Unpublished report.

strong national identity as older age groups, and that their notions of citizenship mirror those of the previous generation. Despite their lack of involvement in formal political activities, youth have been at the forefront of many of the recent protest actions in South Africa over education reform³² and emerging movements seeking to shift structural and systemic oppression such as “Rhodes Must Fall”.³³

Moreover, the high level of youth engagement in the drafting of the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020³⁴ demonstrates that young people will mobilise, and do so en masse and to great effect, over issues that affect their lives, when they are provided with a genuine platform from which to express their views. Thus, while young people are alienated from contemporary South African democratic political culture, they are not singularly apathetic – and seek mechanisms and avenues to express their dissatisfaction outside of formal institutions.³⁵ This reflects their growing discontent with more formal structures that have failed to provide adequate platforms for them to engage as legitimate, respected decision-makers and make their voices heard.³⁶

One should therefore not confuse young people’s dissatisfaction with the public service with a lack of social or civic engagement, or with a lack of optimism and independence. Youth dissatisfaction

with public service typically reflects national sentiment, and is not symptomatic of youth alone.³⁷ There is evidence to suggest that South Africa’s youth are socially and civically engaged, albeit in less formally organised activities than prior generations may have been. Figure 21 illustrates that while involvement in political activities may be low, a large number of young people report offering assistance to neighbours, active involvement in social or religious groups, engagement with social media, and volunteer work, many of which require considerable time commitments.

How can a greater sense of belonging be built amongst young people in South Africa?

*I grew up frustrated by the fact that we were constantly left out of decisions affecting our lives. I became angry and cynical about so-called “development plans”. I was determined that one day I would find a way for the voice of my community to be heard... If young people could just see a little further over the horizon, it would give them a sense of hope and imminent possibility. If we feel connected to something bigger than ourselves, we have more incentive to study harder and keep away from harm.*³⁸

iii Registered voters between the ages of 18 and 29 years accounted for a quarter of all registered voters. However, turnout data disaggregated by age have not yet been released by the Independent Electoral Commission, making it difficult to assess the extent of youth voter turnout.

Despite the important role that youth have played in the social and political transformation of South Africa, a traditionally welfarist approach to child and youth service delivery has failed to recognise youth as stakeholders who should be consulted in the policy-making process.³⁹ In contrast, a developmental approach would explicitly recognise the agency of youth and incorporate them as legitimate stakeholders with equal voice. The current emphasis on promoting “active” and/or “global” citizenship within education systems globally is based on two assumptions: Firstly, it assumes that youth are citizens-in-waiting in need of preparation and education to take up this role; and secondly, that there exists “good” and “bad” citizenship – and more often than not, it assumes that youth are usually “bad” citizens. Consider the inclusion in the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020 of a recommendation that:

*All young people must familiarise themselves with the Constitution and ... live the Bill of Responsibilities ... which ... urges young people to “accept the call to responsibility that comes with the many rights and freedoms that they have been privileged to inherit from the sacrifice and suffering of those who came before”.*⁴⁰

The policy also emphasises narrow patriotism and engagement with national symbols as a key to youth development:

*Young people must take pride in learning and internalising the Preamble to the Constitution, because it (the Preamble) embodies what it means to be South African. Young people must agitate ... that the Preamble to the Constitution is recited in all school gatherings, followed by the solemn singing of the National Anthem.*⁴¹

Take youth agency seriously

The positioning of young people as needing to be grateful to their elders, and as needing to learn their responsibilities and become good patriotic citizens, is condescending. This rhetoric must change if youth are to be supported to use their agency and power effectively. Moreover, the empowerment of young people must also recognise and address the ways in which the marginalisation of adults and young people are interlinked in the context of fierce competition for scarce opportunities.

Those who hold political power as custodians of South Africa’s democratic future must, in the first instance, take the issue of “youth belonging” seriously. Political involvement will only become attractive for youth when they see their needs and aspirations genuinely represented in political processes. This requires looking beyond whether youth are exercising their political right to vote, and includes questioning the extent to which youth concerns are actively articulated within the political mainstream. Belonging also requires that youth are granted the power to influence how their needs, fears, hopes, frustrations and aspirations are represented in local, provincial and national politics.

The involvement of youth as key stakeholders in the debates over the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020 is a small step in the right direction. This agency must be deliberately and systematically

fostered. Encouraging voluntarism on its own (such as in a national youth service) is an important source of social capital, but it should not be equated with agency. Rather, it is important to invest in public-minded citizens – “growing their literacy to live in a civil society, their competence to participate in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act deliberately in a pluralist world, the empathy to accommodate others”.⁴² Unlike long-term interventions like universal education, this kind of social capital can be built up in a relatively short period of time.⁴³

Provide support and bridging relationships

*New connections are vital. It is almost impossible for a young person without social connections to get access to finance or to meet a person of influence in the sector in which they work. If we are to create a culture of innovation, we have to open up our social systems and develop connections across race and class.*⁴⁴

Adults’ recognition of youth as legitimate decision-makers with equal status is only a first step. In addition, it is important to provide appropriate bridging relationships or structural support to enable youth to access resources and opportunities and to exercise personal agency. This may take the form of meaningful incentives: either material support, such as the youth wage subsidy, or the provision of income maintenance for young people,⁴⁵ or skills development and public recognition⁴⁶. In addition, young people may benefit from programmes that raise their critical awareness of the intergenerational persistence of material, social and emotional conditions, and the ways in which these conditions affect their current context and lives. Providing appropriate career and life guidance through trusted role models, and revising curricula to deal with these issues is key.

Examples include the Activate! Change Drivers Network, launched in 2012, which consists of just over 1,500 young leaders who are envisioning a new approach to social activism – building innovative local solutions to the critical challenges their communities face, and connecting nationally to amplify their impact. Core to the Activate! programme is an emphasis on building a new identity for the public good that bridges the poles of South African society through deep relationships, a common identity (being an “Activator”) and semi-structured, ongoing support. The combination of relational and structural support is critical to the success of the programme.

Use media as a platform that empowers youth

Media-based programmes are also important in giving young people a sense of social and cultural power and identity. One such initiative is Live Mag, a social enterprise where young people are up-skilled in journalism and media skills through producing a nationally distributed youth-focused magazine. The power of Live Mag rests not only in the skills young people develop, but in creating a space for them to define and position themselves in relation to both emerging consumer and celebrity trends, and socio-political issues. Their Voting Is Power (#VIPSA) campaign

Case 11: Tshekiso's story – Youth longing to belong

I decided I would definitely be a “somebody” in life, and thought that becoming a gangster would give me the self-esteem I wanted so badly. I was 10 years old when I joined that gang. But now I’m part of another gang: Activate! It brings together young leaders across South Africa, building their sense of identity, belonging and common purpose. That purpose is to make our country a better place. There are so many other young people out there just like me. Our smouldering anger has few outlets. Lately, several politicians have taken to calling us a “ticking time bomb”. They mean well, but they need to understand that the implied threat gives us a perverse sense of power in the same way that gangs hold sway through menace. Please stop defining us in terms of deficit and destructive risk. It feeds our

Source: Molohlanji T (2012) Youth longing to belong. *Sunday Times Review*, 3 June 2012: 1

pessimism. It traps us in the prisons of our minds. Actually, I’m still motivated by the same basic instincts that caused me to join the gang. I want to belong, to know who I am and to feel that I have a purpose. It was that desire that caused me to join loveLife in the same way as I had joined the B.D.C. gang a decade before. My material condition has not changed much, but I now have some power to respond differently to life... Many young South Africans are still looking for a new identity. They don’t want to be defined as heirs of apartheid, but as shapers of the future....Defining that new identity starts with us, but if older people want to help, they should change the way they talk about us.

uses the tools of social media and consumer marketing to engage young people around their power as voters. A similar initiative in the media space is the Children’s Radio Foundation, which works with young teenage reporters to stimulate conversations around youth issues on community radio.

Support through dedicated youth programmes

Many other youth programmes represent concrete examples that deliver youth-focused skills development, whilst at the same time providing bridging relationships into economic and social opportunities. Some of the early evidence in an external evaluation of Activate! shows that Activators demonstrate greater social cooperation in solving a collective dilemma than a control group, and are also significantly more likely to report playing a leadership role in a volunteer or civic organisation. There have also been positive effects on Activators’ employment expectations and job-seeking behaviour.⁴⁷

A survey of self-reported outcomes of the loveLife groundBREAKERS programme showed very positive differences between groundBREAKERS and their same-age counterparts, although the study methodology did not account for selection bias. The study showed that nearly 50% of groundBREAKER graduates achieved some level of post-matric qualification (against only 6% of their same-age counterparts), 60% of groundBREAKERS were employed (compared to only 36% of their counterparts), and two-thirds of groundBREAKERS who were still involved in community organisations held leadership positions.⁴⁸ This emerging evidence makes a strong case for the positive effects of “soft skills” interventions that focus on citizenship, identity and belonging, even on hard outcomes such as employment.

Government has, and continues to place, a lot of stock in National Youth Service programmes as their primary youth development intervention. Programmes such as the National Rural Youth Service programme (NARYSEC) and the YouthBuild programme

have been rolled out^{iv} to over 15,000 young people.⁴⁹ However, NARYSEC^v, which is the largest youth development programme in government,⁵⁰ has come under fire for its low wages and the fact that the 48-month-long programme does not provide certification to facilitate access to the labour market.⁵¹ Interestingly, NARYSEC is not mentioned within the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020, despite being the largest youth service programme. Importantly, there are no comprehensive impact evaluations of any of these government programmes, so it is unclear whether they provide the personal development, bridging relationships, or opportunities that they are intended to.

Strengthen the National Youth Policy

The following recommendations may be useful in strengthening the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020 in order to build youth identity, belonging and citizenship:

- Strengthen support for sporting and cultural activities by building more effective and responsive funding mechanisms at local and provincial levels, or through specific agencies. In addition, city planners and local governments should explore mechanisms to ensure access to facilities for all young people, which can be used for both recreation and identity-building (as is the case with, for example, Amandla EduFootball). This includes removing or reducing fees for the use of community halls, which currently exclude the majority of marginalised young people from these spaces.
- Move away from nation-building through “patriotic” rhetoric (such as repeating the Preamble of the Constitution), and build real citizenship competencies, including knowledge of how the various levels of government work and the electoral system, and build an expectation of high-quality service with the knowledge of how to navigate socio-political systems.
- Support at a much larger scale the youth development efforts of civil society organisations that are able to innovate and respond

iv This is an estimate based on a report in 2013 that 12,881 participants were enrolled in NARYSEC at that point.

v NARYSEC’s annual budget is roughly R550 million – far exceeding the total NYDA annual budget of just under R400million.

to the particular needs of young people in their contexts. At present, there are almost no mechanisms through which government systematically funds youth development through civil society organisations.

- Review the implementation of the National Youth Service and NARYSEC programmes to ensure that they focus on bridging relationships into labour markets or higher education, alongside identity-building.

In order to build a greater sense of belonging for South Africa's youth, there is a need to improve the quality of their experiences across the board: how they are parented; their educational experiences; their experience of health and health care services;

and their access to the material conditions that enable a sense of real and imminent possibility in life. But there are also quick wins which can have some immediate effects – programmes that build a sense of collective identity to overcome isolation, that build a real sense of capacity and power, that support young people to craft their own narratives, that provide rituals and affirmation, and that also form bridging relationships into further opportunities. If these programmes also support young people to “knock-on” their agency to their peers, South Africa may well be able to build a real sense of power and hope embedded in real prospects for upward mobility among its youth.

Case 12: The impact of mobile phones on youth in South Africa

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Although only a quarter of South African households have access to the internet in their homes, mobile technology has drastically expanded this access.⁵³ Nine out of every 10 South African households own a cellphone,⁵³ and many urban and rural households access the internet via mobile phones. National survey data indicate that young people aged 15 – 24 account for nearly 72% of mobile ownership.⁵⁴

These figures show the potential of mobile phone technology to support youth in their development, and in their search for opportunities. Yet, despite widespread usage among young people, little is known about how mobile phone technology impacts on their lives. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data collected from 1,500 young peopleⁱ in South Africaⁱⁱ, this case documents the ways in which mobile phone use impacts both positively and negatively on youth.⁵⁵

The research provides evidence of the creative ways youth engage with mobile technology to access information on education, health care and economic and employment opportunities. Yet, alongside these benefits, there is evidence of significant threats and risks related to mobile phone use. In addition, the research highlights the role of mobile phones in the development of young people's identity and sense of belonging.

How do mobile phones impact positively on young people?

Mobile phones have become an integral part of daily life for many young people in South Africa. This is partly due to the availability of low-cost phones, prepaid subscriptions, prepaid airtime in low denominations and free off-peak minutes.⁵⁶ Some service providers or products also offer contract options that give young people cheap or free ways to communicate and access the internet.

The study showed that mobile phones make it easier to maintain communication with family and friends, and those who may have moved away in search of work. They allow for an easier flow of resources – for example, when money is transferred electronically between family members. Knowledge and information are passed on or are more easily accessed, and local and global networks open up to young people who otherwise would not have access. Mobile phones are also used by youth to call for help in health-related emergencies, relay urgent news, organise transport, plan social activities or simply ask for funds from parents or older siblings. The study showed that 61% of learners used a cell phone to ask someone

for school fees or associated expenses such as a uniform and lunch in the 12 months prior to the study.

Mobile phones have also taken on a central role in education, job search and livelihood support. Learners reported using their phones to search the internet for help with their homework and many use Mxit and WhatsApp to discuss homework with friends and organise study groups. In the survey, 48% of young people who were enrolled and regularly attending school said they used a cell phone to get information or other help with school work in the week prior to the survey. This included both contacting friends and others for assistance with schoolwork, and browsing the internet to find help with schoolwork.

I am using the cell phone to Google search for information at school, also ... Facebook ... sites ... such as ... Master maths [where] you [can] request an answer for any mathematics-related question. (16-year-old female, Eastern Cape)

Older youth reported using their mobile phones as valuable tools in their livelihood strategies. They relied on their mobile phones to conduct job searches, build networks, contact potential employers and even organise their small businesses. Owning a cell phone means being contactable by employers and having the power to manage one's resource networks.

I check the internet once a week for any vacancies. If I find a vacancy, even if it has passed, I make phone contact... I call the numbers [and] I normally ask the person if I can send my CV so that he or she can have a look into it. I also contact these people to check if they can tell me about the times when they have vacancies. (25-year-old female, Gauteng/North West province)

Occasionally young people reported being engaged in phone-related employment such as selling airtime or mobile phone accessories. Of the 298 15 – 25-year-olds not enrolled in any form of education at the time of the study, 46% reported using their phones for job search in the 12 months prior to the survey.

I sell airtime for all networks ... I also sell and register sim cards [as required by the Regulation of Interception of Communication Act - RICA]. I sell electricity over the phone ... I charge R6 for R5 airtime so I earn a R1 profit ... I have recently started this business [so] I don't have much experience as to how much profit I make. (21-year-old man, who also sells fruit, biscuits etc., Eastern Cape)

i Young people were between the ages of 9 to 25, with 893 aged 15 – 25.

ii This project was part of a larger three country study (Ghana, Malawi and South Africa) on the usage of mobile phone technology among young people. The study was conducted by Durham University (see www.dur.ac.uk/child.phones/).

How do mobile phones inform young people's identity and sense of belonging?

The role of mobile phones in young people's lives can perhaps best be understood in terms identity formation and belonging. Social network sites are an important way for young people to stay connected to friends, family and broader social communities. Mobile phone have become status symbols and provide youth with a sense of belonging to their peer group.⁵⁷

*[Without a smart phone] I feel I am missing out a lot ...
I feel left out and it hurts me ...* (16-year-old woman,
Eastern Cape)

*I asked for a Blackberry because it made me a recognised
person to my peers.* (20-year-old man, Eastern Cape)

Yet, mobile phones also create new social hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion alongside immense social pressure. Not having a technologically advanced phone leads to low self-esteem and even bullying parents into buying expensive phones to fit in.

What are the risks associated with mobile phone use among young people?

Mobile phones can be highly beneficial but their downside in schools and elsewhere is becoming increasingly apparent: 70% of learners reported negative impacts on their schoolwork. Academic performance was affected by disrupted classes due to learner and teacher calls – a massive 90% of learners reported teachers using phones during lesson time, and it is highly unlikely that the majority of these calls were directly relevant to their professional practice.

Further, learners mentioned disruptions in their sleep patterns associated with cheap night calls; time lost through prolonged sessions on social network sites; and increasingly widespread access to pornography, even in some primary schools.

A UNICEF study found that 42% of young people in South Africa talk to strangers on Mxit every day and 33% do so at least once a week.⁵⁸ But the internet is a largely unpoliced environment where anyone can upload information about themselves – authentic or not.⁵⁹ By developing virtual relationships with strangers, youth are at risk of becoming victims of online crimes and violence during potential face-to-face meetings.

Learners also mentioned cyberbullying (mainly via voice calls) as a particularly large threat, affecting the young girls in

the study more than their male peers.⁶⁰ Young girls are also particularly at risk of sexual harassment and exploitation by men who manage to get hold of their numbers, including their male teachers.

As ardent users of mobile phones, youth need to be made aware of the dangers that come with access to mobile technology. The following section addresses areas for consideration in helping youth navigate the digital environment.

What are the potential opportunities for intervention?

It is clear that the expanded use of mobile phone technology offers huge potential for supporting young people in the context of education, livelihoods and identity creation. Mobile phones can substantially expand learning opportunities by enabling access to information directly relevant to the curriculum, but also by helping learners to explore their identity and potential. The transformative potential of this technology for young lives is exciting but still uncertain and its support requires careful consideration by government departments, schools, caregivers, communities and network providers, in addition to youth themselves.

At present, most parents either remain largely unaware of their children's online activities, or they do not understand how to help them use the internet safely and responsibly. Schools are well placed to teach children about online safety but may need to rethink and streamline their current approach. Although many schools have cell phone policies in place, these vary from school to school, do not always deal with the issue of internet safety, and are often inconsistent. Many are, for example, highly restrictive towards learners, thereby prohibiting lessons about responsible usage – but not to teachers, an issue that needs urgent attention.

In South Africa there are currently very few formal initiatives to address the online threats faced by youth. The Department of Basic Education has drawn up guidelines on e-Safety in Schools⁶¹ but this has yet to be implemented or integrated into current school curricula. It would benefit youth to focus on safe and responsible online behavior rather than restrict or banning usage all together. Given the significant extent to which peer pressure defines how youth engage with mobile technology, it is important to involve young people in the process of finding solutions. This includes creating opportunities for open and frank discussion – in families, schools, community fora and the media – so that young people are able to make informed choices and develop effective strategies to navigate the risks and benefits associated with new technologies.

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Developing young people's capacities to navigate adversity

Sharlene Swartz and Crain Soudien (Human Sciences Research Council)

There are multiple factors that can help interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Education and employment are central: keeping young people in school, and ensuring that the quality of education received enables access to further skills training to improve their chances of entering the labour market. Accessing public goods such as health care, good nutrition, clean water and sanitation and housing that provides shelter and dignity is also fundamental. Social, cultural and symbolic capitals¹ that enable access to networks, improve psychosocial well-being, provide insight into the so-called “rules of the game” and open opportunities for advancement and entry into the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship are also critical.

Previous editions of the *South African Child Gauge* have shown how the lives of children and young people are affected not only by their immediate contexts² of home, school and community, but also by structural systems such as policies, laws, social welfare and the world financial system. Political shifts over time also impact young people's lives, and this is especially important in the South African context where young people have experienced a movement from apartheid to democracy.

In this concluding essay we focus on youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty and ask:

- How are young people in South Africa doing?
- What is needed to develop a strong implementation plan for youth development?
- What new directions could help youth (and those who work with them) navigate adversity?

How are young people in South Africa doing?

This edition has chosen to focus on the ways in which education (school and beyond), the labour market, parenting, health, mobility (or stability), and belonging – either perpetuate or disrupt poverty amongst young people. Some areas such as health, education and employment are obvious choices, but others such as parenting, mobility and belonging are areas that youth scholars are increasingly flagging as important in offering nuanced explanations for young people's well-being. In both categories, each essay sought to address the state of the evidence: What is known and not known about how young people are affected in this domain; and what are the opportunities for intervention?

In the introductory essay on p. 22, De Lannoy, Leibbrandt and Frame drew attention to important trends concerning youth in South Africa, some of which are worth repeating:

- Poverty levels³ for youth between 15 and 24 have, since 1996, decreased slightly for African youth (from 69% to 65% in 2011), remained the same for White and Indian youth, but increased for Coloured youth (from 37% to 40%).³
- While the number of years of education undertaken by young people has increased, this has not translated into greater levels of employment; nor have skills levels between generations increased, perpetuating low income levels for many youth who do enter the labour market.
- Youth under the age of 25 comprise almost half of South Africa's population and those between age 15 and 24 make up 20%.⁴

This latter trend – that of a large youth population – is of special importance.⁵ Many believe it represents an unusual window of opportunity. With fewer dependants (both children and aging parents) than at any other time in history, young people have the aspiration and potential for enormous economic productivity. But they have to be – at a minimum – educated, healthy and employed. If this is not the case, it is feared that there will be no “demographic dividend” such as has occurred in Asia⁶, and that instead youth might turn to restlessness and frustration as was seen recently in the Middle East and North Africa⁷.

Education, health and employment alone pose enormous challenges for young people mired in poverty. Low rates of school completion, early drop-out and poor quality schooling become a “poverty trap” for youth, as explained in the essay by Spaul on p. 34. Despite having more years of schooling than their parents, the poor quality of their education results in, on the one hand, unemployment or low skilled jobs, and on the other, to limited access to post-school and higher education. Those who have post-school qualifications earn significantly more than those who do not.

From a health perspective, the essay by Cooper, De Lannoy and Rule on p. 60 focused on reproductive health (including time of child bearing and the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS), the consequences of exposure to violence and substance misuse – and its effects on economic productivity. The authors also touched on issues of mental health – showing how poverty's silent effects of depression, hopelessness, stress and anxiety are frequently undiagnosed and

¹ Using the upper bound poverty level of R620 per person per month, based on the StatsSA upper-bound poverty line for 2011.

seldom treated due to an absence of facilities. The same holds true for young people with cognitive and physical disabilities – there is an absence of research and visible treatment options for poor youth.

The other issues addressed in this *Child Gauge* – parenting, mobility and belonging – also have economic effects. Poverty detracts from the support, guidance and supervision possible from parents or peers. Young people are frequently mobile – often in contexts of ruptured communal ties and diminished social support. For many this is a gamble. Not all benefit from their move to urban areas and they may lose the opportunity of building their sense of citizenship and belonging.

In their treatment of each issue, contributors have tried to dispel many of the moral panics besetting the country – “school-girl pregnancy”, “youth-headed homes”, “rampant youth violence” and “ticking unemployment time bombs”. Of course young people are in dire straits – but they also have enormous potential to act in their own interests and for the benefit of their families and society in general.

What is needed to develop a strong implementation plan for youth development?

This *Child Gauge* has showcased the many ways in which the effects of poverty are both transmitted and interrupted, and has placed equal focus on multidisciplinary evidence, policies and interventions from various sources. This approach provides important insights into what support to youth is already underway, and what can be done immediately and in the longer term. Among the many individual recommendations that each essay makes, five overarching themes have emerged. These are worth restating as a series of strategic steps or questions for action and analysis, and are summarised in figure 22.

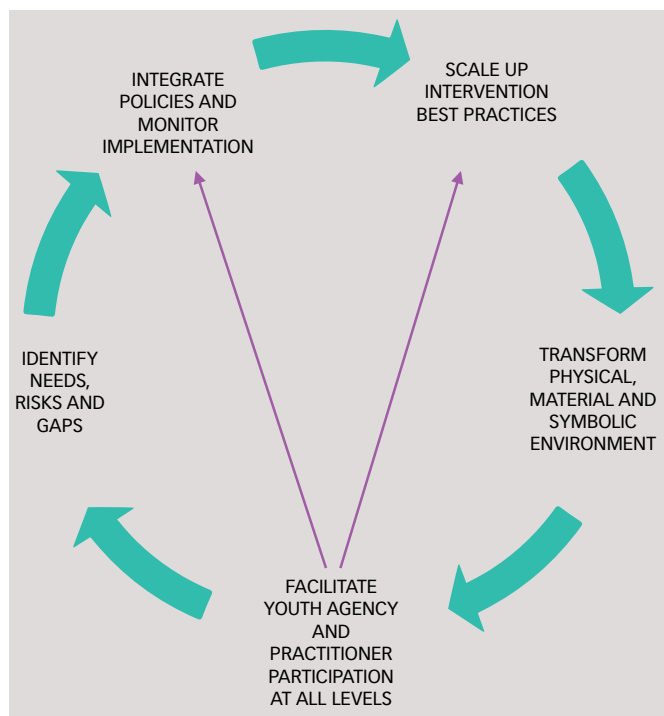
Facilitate youth agency and practitioner involvement at all levels

Despite the fact that many of the challenges that young people face are structural in nature, young people have valuable insights to contribute. Furthermore, when young people participate in formulating policies and strategies they tend to remain engaged and have repeatedly demonstrated an ability to organise and act. Activate!, IkamvaYouth and the Rhodes Must Fall movement are a few of many good examples. The same goes for youth work practitioners, many of whom are key drivers in youth NGOs and other community-based initiatives. Whilst both these groups (youth and practitioners) are frequently included in consultations, it is seldom at all levels of engagement, and rarely as a starting point. Engaging youth and youth practitioners is a key starting point in ensuring a strong implementation plan for youth development.

Identify needs, risks and gaps

Youth and practitioners have a particularly useful role to play in identifying young people’s changing *needs* and the *risks* they face. Too little investment is made into regular national surveys that cover the entire range of these needs and risks. Instead data are

Figure 22: Five recommendations for evaluating a strong youth development plan



sporadic, target different sub-categories of youth, and result in persistent knowledge gaps. Not enough is known, for example, about youth living with disabilities, as well as the mental health issues they face (including those resulting from racism, learning disabilities and their relationship to aggression and violence), and how best to offer services to address these. The definition of “youth” also needs to be revisited so that interventions are better targeted. There are enormous differences between young people aged 15 – 19, 20 – 29 and those over 30. This wide age range of youth may have been useful at transition in 1994,⁸ but we now need to think differently. Furthermore, a lot of the existing research tends to capture moments in time – rather than being longitudinal which would allow us to see trends over time and measure which interventions work and yield lasting benefit. Studies also tend to be clustered around youth sexual health, due to the huge impact of HIV and AIDS. This must now change. Efforts must also resolutely focus on understanding how youth are by themselves, and with others, attempting to overcome adversity.

Integrate policies and monitor implementation

The need to address the lack of coordination of youth policies needs little explication. A key example is how youth employment policies and programmes are located in at least nine government departments. In some respects the new National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020 addresses lack of coordination by proposing provincial youth desks, although it does not yet have an implementation plan to realise this goal. The monitoring of policy implementation has also been poor. The policy that pregnant learners are not to be permanently excluded from school – but they frequently are in practice – serves as an important example. It may now

be necessary to establish a youth ministry or at least an inter-ministerial parliamentary portfolio committee for youth affairs to ensure that policies are both coordinated, and implemented as planned.

Evaluate best practices and scale up

As with policy coordination and implementation, there is also serious lack of mechanisms to evaluate and scale up interventions for youth. Competitive funding environments for non-governmental organisations, the dearth of skilful facilitators to bring youth agencies together for common purpose, and the lack of government coordination for youth development keep excellent programmes local and benefit only a few. Many of the programmes showcased in the essays offer promise but urgently need to be evaluated, and the successful ones need to be scaled up and rolled out. Of course such evaluations and scale ups are expensive – both in terms of money, time and the will to build, metaphorically speaking, a city of benefit instead of individual houses.

Transform the physical, material and symbolic environment

Arguably many of the policies and interventions described in this *Child Gauge* will no longer be needed if wide-reaching structural change is achieved – such as universal employment and access

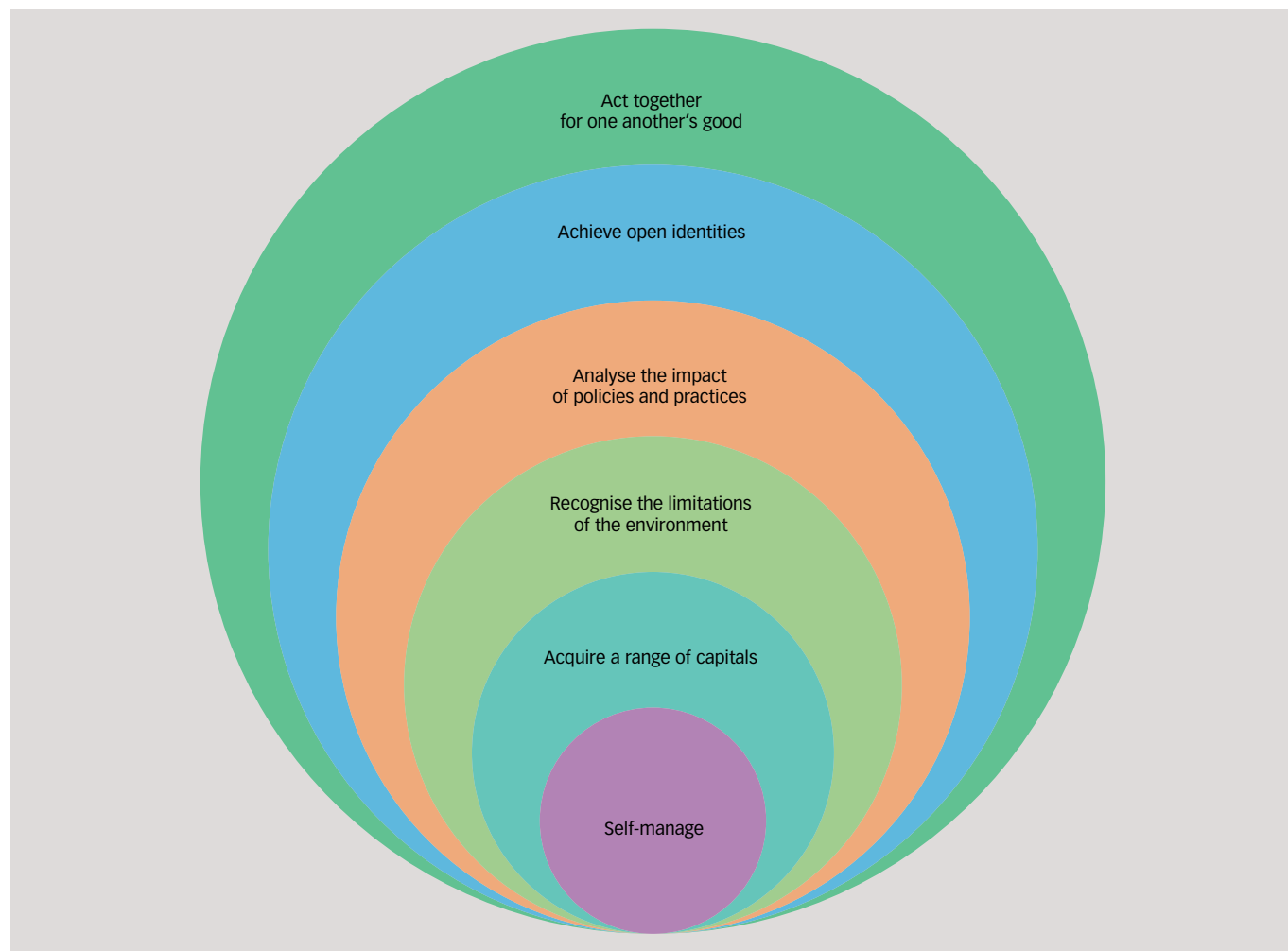
to health, housing, education, and social security. Of course, this is easy to state but difficult to achieve. Furthermore, this basic structural change needs to be accompanied by deeper symbolic transformation. Places where youth live need to foster *dignity*, *equality* and *belonging*, education needs to be of a *high quality*, and geared to ensure *meaningful* employment. Communities need to be safe, and offer opportunities to enjoy friendships, establish families, and participate in civic decision-making across previous divides. These are mammoth goals for a country burdened by a history of domination and inequality.

So while structural change is a priority, if no effort is made to topple racial domination and gender oppression, the gains made will not last. Without such transformation, policies and programmes will only help a few – those who are able to access remedial support to mitigate risk or those who are exceptionally resilient. An enabling and transformed environment for young people must be possible for all young people.

Developing a scorecard

As blunt an instrument as scorecards are, they serve an important function to promote discussion. They serve as a reminder to monitor how we are doing. The strategic questions described above lend themselves to asking, in each of the areas covered in this *Child*

Figure 23: A set of navigational capacities for youth in South Africa



Gauge (and in others too), how are we doing? A scorecard that follows these questions offers the opportunity to include multiple perspectives; to discuss opinions and examine evidence, not only in broad areas, but by asking deeper questions in a focused manner. Fundamentally, the value of a scorecard lays not so much in the rating given, but in the way it compels us – as practitioners and policy-makers – to interrogate current actions.

With regards to education, how are we including youth voices and practitioner participation? With regards to health, how is it that we seem to be faring somewhat better, but seem to be failing dismally in the areas of, for example, civic engagement and belonging? Why have we tended to be better at identifying needs, risks and gaps across many areas, yet still fail to scale up best practices in any? What practices need to be urgently scaled up to bring about the most significant benefit, and how might we go about achieving this in the next two to five years? Are we doing enough to integrate policies and monitor implementation, especially since we now have a new Youth Policy and pending implementation plans? Are we keeping track of efforts to change the material circumstances of young people as well as the symbolic environment of race and gender? These are the questions we hope these five recommendations provoke, and which along with a participatory and consultative scorecard, may serve to focus on the outcomes we want to achieve for young people.

What new directions could help youth (and those who work with them) navigate adversity?

Almost all the issues highlighted in this *Child Gauge* – education, employment, health, parenting, mobility and belonging– apply disproportionately to young people growing up in the aftermath of apartheid. Young people who live in more privileged contexts have far more capitals to draw on. Even while some of them live in families that have problems, they still, on average, have access to more social, cultural and financial capital. This is seldom true for a young person living in poverty. Instead, their problems quickly escalate – ill health or youthful parenting may turn to school drop-out, school drop-out results in failure to get decent work, chronic unemployment may result in substance misuse, and substance misuse slides into criminality. There are of course many pathways – not all of them as dire as the one just described – but most require intervention in order to help young people get back on track. At each stage there are structural impediments to overcome – but are there perhaps new ways of talking about the tools young people need to successfully navigate these structural and social constraints?

Speaking only of youth risk-taking, or youthful resilience, ignores the structural nature of these constraints and tends to place individual effort and individual remediation at the centre of the intervention. A new directionⁱⁱ for youth development research and practice must begin to talk about the *navigational capacities*

that these young people need in order to achieve the best possible outcomes given their environments. Navigational capacities are no more than a conceptual metaphor that evokes a sense of what kind of capacities (inspired by the work of Arjun Appadurai⁹) youth need to negotiate difficult terrain and achieve a successful outcome, recognising that the shift from adversity to advantage is a journey *over time* requiring some direction – hence *navigational*¹⁰. Furthermore, that the way forward is through competencies that can be acquired or learned, rather than dependent on external resources – hence a *capacity*. Navigational capacities take seriously youth context and values which may differ substantially from the dominant methods and theories currently in use. Such a conceptual metaphor draws together developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner’s work on the various systems that impact on youth development, and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s multiple forms of capital – which we have previously described. We offer six tentative navigational capacities (see figure 23) for youth development in adverse contexts such as South Africa.

These are novel ideas – and require much more work, discussion and application. What follows are initial ideas about the broad domains in which youth might be helped to develop these capacities in various ways – by adults offering guidance and mentoring, by youth organising themselves and learning by doing, and by academics highlighting good practices to follow or contextualise. It is our hope that these capacities will be a catalyst to move the discussion from deficit to asset, from the transmission to the disruption of poverty, and from universal strategies to those attuned to particular contexts.

The capacity to act together for one another’s good

Young people living in adversity are often influenced by collective cultural and religious values. Often, not always, these offer opportunities for positive social action¹¹ for working together to navigate hostile contexts, advocating for resources, and mobilising to effect change¹². Such collective action cannot be underestimated, but it is also not sufficiently encouraged as an important strategy for youth development.

The capacity to achieve open, non-oppressive identities

For young people living in adverse and challenging environments, the issue of self-esteem is frequently entangled in group identities especially with regard to race, class, gender, ethnicity and geography.¹³ In order to navigate these fraught contexts, it is critical that young people develop the capacity to achieve a personal and group sense of belonging. This is also related to the effect of joblessness on self-esteem,¹⁴ and on the way those who are frustrated by joblessness treat one another (gender based-violence¹⁵ for example). It is therefore critical for young people in adversity to find ways to embrace diversity, to adopt non-oppressive practices, and to do so both individually and collectively. Communities, families, churches, schools, and government all have a role to play in helping them to achieve this.

ii The Human Sciences Research Council is currently embarking on a research study on the resources and strategies needed by young people living in the Global South to navigate adversity.

The capacity to analyse the impact of the policies and practices of their extended environment

Bronfenbrenner frequently shows how various policies, practices and institutions influence the lives of children and youth even when they are not intended to have a *direct* influence on their lives such as their parents' working hours, a city's transport regulations, and government policies on health, education and migration. This *Child Gauge* has illustrated how these systems impact on perpetuating poverty. It is therefore essential that youth develop the capacity to help change these systems, and to offer suggestions on how the effect of policies and practices on their lives are analysed and understood. This would ensure that young people do not blame themselves for many of the constraints they experience – which so often leads to hopelessness, anti-social behaviour and avolition – the loss of will to act¹⁶. Instead this capacity has the potential to identify strategies to “work around” the barriers that are *not of their own making*, yet which stand in their way. Many of these aims are likely to be achieved by having explicit discussion with young people and by intentionally bringing these discussions into the realm of policy-making and implementation.

The capacity to recognise the interconnecting effects of primary environments

Related, yet not so distant, is the capacity to recognise the ways in which the primary contexts of school, home, community and “streets” interact to either help or hinder young people's development. Here community includes cultural and religious influences while streets connote primarily the recreational pursuits of youth culture including all forms of media. For young people living in poverty, key to navigating their lives is the capacity to fully understand the way in which social connections derived from family, school, mosque, or sports club might help them in the future, as well as how to overcome their negative features.

The capacity to acquire a range of capitals

To speak of capitals is to speak of the fuel that drives success. These capitals include the social connections referred to earlier, as well as an ability to interpret the rules that govern upward mobility, community and national development, workplace successes along with actual financial wealth and assets. Here the capacities needed are those which help young people individually and collectively to set goals and make plans, articulate views in convincing and productive ways, and evaluate opportunities to judge which to

pursue and from which to walk away. Developing these capacities will require focused attention and support in homes, schools, communities and local and national government structures.

The capacity to self-manage

Finally, young people need to be helped to develop their self-management capacities – to see themselves as agents rather than victims, to overcome disappointments and failures – of which there are likely to be many, and to plan time and resources, especially given the scarcity of ongoing work until at least their late twenties.¹⁷ Placing self-management last is also intentional; a push back against the many ways in which youth interventions frequently begin by asking individuals to choose, little realising how few choices there actually are. Self-management is important but cannot and must not stand on its own.

Last word

This concluding essay has touched on the many ways in which young people's lives in South Africa are affected by poverty. Each essay has offered in some detail what these actions might be. It has also offered a five-fold rubric through which implementation plans in each area might be evaluated: How is South Africa doing to ensure youth agency and practitioner participation? What do we know in each area of young people's lives and are we able to plug the gaps? Is there coordination amongst the many policies that sit across government departments and what is being done to ensure they are implemented as was envisaged? What plans and strategies do we have to identify and scale up as best practices for youth development? What progress is being made to transform the physical, material and symbolic environments in which young people are expected to inhabit and thrive?

More imaginatively, this essay has suggested ways in which young people and those who work with them and advocate on their behalf might map out the way forward for young people's development in the midst of adversity. We are far from a consensus of what these navigational capacities may be or from fully describing them, and even less certain about how best they might be implemented. However, we are hopeful that this collection of focused evidence, new questions and fresh language has offered manageable steps towards achieving the vision we all share – as practitioners, policy-makers, academics and civil society – for disrupting the effects of poverty on South Africa's youth.

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PART THREE:

Children Count – The Numbers

Part three presents child- and youth-centred data to monitor progress and track the realisation of their socio-economic rights in South Africa. This year it presents data from 2002 – 2013 and identifies the main trends over this 12-year period. A set of key indicators tracks progress in the following domains:

- Demography of South Africa's children;
- Income poverty, unemployment and social grants;
- Child health;
- Children's access to education;
- Children's access to housing; and
- Children's access to basic services.

A full set of indicators and detailed commentary are available on www.childrencount.ci.org.za.

Introducing Children Count – *Abantwana Babalulekile*

South Africa's commitment to the realisation of socio-economic rights is contained in the Constitution, the highest law of the land, which includes provisions to ensure that no person should be without the basic necessities of life. These are specified in the Bill of Rights, particularly section 26 (access to adequate housing); section 27 (health care, sufficient food, water and social security); section 28 (the special rights of children); and section 29 (education).

Children are specifically mentioned, and are also included under the general rights: every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services. These form part of what are collectively known as socio-economic rights. While these rights are guaranteed by the Constitution, the question is: *how well is South Africa doing in realising these rights for all children?* In order to answer this question, it is necessary to monitor the situation of children, which means there is a need for regular information that is specifically about them.

A rights-based approach

Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile, an ongoing data and advocacy project of the Children's Institute, was established in 2005 to monitor progress for children. It provides reliable and accessible child-centred information which can be used to inform the design and targeting of policies, programmes and interventions, and as a tool for tracking progress in the realisation of children's rights.

Child-centred data

Any monitoring project needs regular and reliable data, and South Africa is fortunate to be a fairly data-rich country. There is an array of administrative data sets, and the national statistics body, Statistics South Africa, undertakes regular national population surveys which provide useful information on a range of issues. However, most information about the social and economic situation of people living in South Africa does not focus on children, but rather counts all individuals or households. This is the standard way for central statistics organs to present national data, but it is of limited use for those interested in understanding the situation of children.

"Child-centred" data does not only mean the use of data about children specifically. It also means using national population or household data, but analysing it at the level of the child. This is important, because the numbers can differ enormously depending on the unit of analysis. For example, national statistics describe the unemployment rate, but only a child-centred analysis can tell how many children live in households where no adult is employed. National statistics show what proportion of households is without adequate sanitation, but when a child-centred analysis is used, the proportion is significantly higher.

Counting South Africa's children

Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile presents child-centred data on many of the areas covered under socio-economic rights. As new data become available with the release of national surveys and other data sources, it is possible to track changes in the conditions of children and their access to services over time. This year, national survey data are presented for each year from 2002 to 2013, and many of the indicators in this issue compare the situation of children over this 12-year period.

The tables on the following pages give basic information about children's demographics, care arrangements, income poverty and social security, education, health and nutritional status, housing and basic services. Each table is accompanied by commentary that provides context and gives a brief interpretation of the data. The data are presented for all children in South Africa and, where possible, by province.

The indicators in this *South African Child Gauge* are a sub-set of the *Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile* indicators on demographics and socio-economic rights. The project's website contains the full range of indicators and more detailed data, as well as links to websites and useful documents. It can be accessed at www.childrencount.ci.org.za.

Confidence intervals

Sample surveys are subject to error. The proportions or percentages simply reflect the mid-point of a possible range, but the true values could fall anywhere between the upper and lower bounds. The confidence intervals indicate the reliability of the estimate at the 95% level. This means that, if independent samples were repeatedly taken from the same population, we would expect the proportion to lie between upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval 95% of the time.

It is important to look at the confidence intervals when assessing whether apparent differences between provinces or sub-groups are real: the wider the confidence interval, the more uncertain the proportion. Where confidence intervals overlap for different sub-populations or time periods, it is not possible to claim that there is a real difference in the proportion, even if the mid-point proportions differ. In the accompanying bar graphs, the confidence intervals are represented by vertical lines at the top of each bar (I).

Data sources and citations

Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile uses a number of data sources. Most of the indicators draw on the General Household Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa, while some draw

on administrative databases used by government departments (Health, Education, and Social Development) to record and monitor the services they deliver.

Most of the indicators presented were developed specifically for this project. Data sources are carefully considered before inclusion, and the strengths and limitations of each are outlined on pp. 133, and on the project website. Definitions and technical notes for the indicators are included in the accompanying commentary, and can also be found on the website.

Here are a couple of examples of how to reference *Children Count* data correctly:

When referencing from the Demography section in this publication, for example:

Hall K, Meintjes H & Sambu W (2015) Demography of South Africa's children. In: De Lannoy A, Swartz S, Lake L & Smith C (eds) *South African Child Gauge 2015*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

When referencing from the Housing and Services online section, for example:

Hall K (2015) Housing and Services – Access to adequate water. *Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile* website, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. Accessed on 20 August 2015: www.childrencount.ci.org.za.

Each domain is introduced below and key findings are highlighted.

Demography of South Africa's children

(pages 102 – 106)

This section provides child population figures and gives a profile of South Africa's children and their care arrangements, including children's co-residence with biological parents, the number and proportion of orphans and children living in child-only households. There were 18.6 million children in South Africa in 2013. Eighteen percent of children have lost a mother, father or both parents; 22% of children do not live with either of their biological parents; and 0.5% of children live in child-only households.

Income poverty, unemployment and social grants

(pages 107 – 113)

In 2013, over half of children (54%) lived below the poverty line (with a per capita income below R671 per month), and 31% lived in households where no adults were employed. Social assistance grants are therefore an important source of income for caregivers to meet children's basic needs. In March 2013, over 11.7 million

children received the Child Support Grant; 500,000 children received the Foster Child Grant; and a further 127,000 children received the Care Dependency Grant.

Child health

(pages 114 – 118)

This section monitors child health through a range of indicators. Under-five mortality has decreased from 81 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 41 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2013. In the same year, 29.5% of pregnant women were estimated to be HIV positive. Just over 23% of children travel far to reach their health care facility and 14% of children live in households that reported child hunger.

Children's access to education

(pages 119 – 126)

Many children in South Africa have to travel long distances to school. One in seven children (14%) live far from their primary school and this increases to nearly one in four children (23%) in secondary school. Despite these barriers, South Africa has made significant strides in improving access to education with a gross attendance rate of 97% in 2013. Access is also increasing in the preschool years, with 91% of 5 – 6-year-olds attending some kind of educational institution or care facility. However, this does not necessarily translate into improved educational outcomes or progress through school. In 2013, 87% of 10 – 11-year-olds had completed grade three, 64% of 16 – 17-year-olds had completed grade nine, and only 50% of 24-year-olds had completed grade 12.

Children's access to housing

(pages 127 – 129)

This section presents data on children living in rural or urban areas, and in adequate housing. The latest available data show that, in 2013, 55% of children were living in urban areas, and 75% of children lived in formal housing. Just over two million children lived in backyard dwellings and shacks in informal settlements, and one in five children (19%) lived in overcrowded households.

Children's access to basic services

(pages 130 – 132)

Without water and sanitation, children face substantial health risks. In 2013, two-thirds of children (68%) had access to drinking water on site, while children's access to adequate toilet facilities rose to 72%.

Demography of South Africa's children

Helen Meintjes (Children's Hospital Trust), Katharine Hall and Winnie Sambu (Children's Institute, University of Cape Town)

The UN General Guidelines for Periodic Reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, paragraph 7, says that reports made by states should be accompanied by "detailed statistical information ... Quantitative information should indicate variations between various areas of the country ... and between groups of children ...".¹

The number and proportion of children living in South Africa

In mid-2013, South Africa's total population was estimated at 53 million people, of whom 18.6 million were children (under 18 years). Children therefore constitute 35% of the total population.

It is not uncommon in South Africa for children to live separately from their biological parents, in the care of other relatives. The distribution of children across provinces is slightly different to that of adults, with a greater proportion of children living in provinces with large rural populations and with greater proportions of adults in the largely metropolitan provinces. Together, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo accommodate almost half of all children in South Africa. A further 19% of children live in Gauteng, a mainly metropolitan province, and 10% of children in the Western Cape. Despite being the smallest province in the country, Gauteng accommodates more than a quarter of all households and adults, but less than a fifth of children. This is because of the relatively large number of adult-only households in that province.

There have been striking changes in the provincial child populations over time. While there has been a decrease in the number of children living in the Free State, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Northern Cape provinces, the number of children living in Gauteng and Western Cape has risen by 24% and 14% respectively. This is caused partly by population movement (for example, when children are part of migrant households or move to join existing urban households), and partly by natural population growth (new births within the province).

We can look at inequality by dividing all households into five equal groups or quintiles, based on total income to the household (including earnings and social grants): with quintile 1 being the poorest 20% of households, quintile 2 being the next poorest and so on. Quintile 5 consists of the least-poor 20%. Nearly two-thirds of children live in the poorest 40% of households.

Children are fairly equally distributed across the age groups, with on average just over one million children in each year under 18. The gender split is equal for children.

These population estimates are based on analyses of the General Household Survey (GHS), which is conducted annually by Statistics South Africa. The population numbers derived from the survey are weighted to the general population using weights provided by Statistics South Africa. The weights are revised from time to time, and the estimated child population size changes as a result. Using previously weighted data, it appeared that the child population had grown by about 6% (a million children) between 2002 and 2012. However the most recently revised weights, applied retrospectively, produce a slight reduction (of 0.2%) in the child population over the 11-year period from 2002 to 2012. A reduction of 0.1% was recorded between 2002 and 2013. There is considerable uncertainty around the official population estimates, particularly in the younger age groups.²

Table 1a: Distribution of households, adults and children in South Africa 2013, by province

Province	Households		Adults		Children		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	% change 2002 – 2013
Eastern Cape	1,663,000	12	3,944,000	11	2,676,000	14	-11.3%
Free State	820,000	6	1,833,000	5	920,000	5	-15.1%
Gauteng	3,914,000	27	9,155,000	27	3,574,000	19	24.3%
KwaZulu-Natal	2,532,000	18	6,364,000	19	4,092,000	22	-4.6%
Limpopo	1,404,000	10	3,294,000	10	2,224,000	12	-10.5%
Mpumalanga	1,049,000	7	2,581,000	8	1,547,000	8	0.8%
North West	1,031,000	7	2,313,000	7	1,284,000	7	1.8%
Northern Cape	319,000	2	747,000	2	416,000	2	-4.8%
Western Cape	1,648,000	11	4,150,000	12	1,867,000	10	14.1%
South Africa	14,382,000	100	34,381,000	100	18,601,000	100	-0.1%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

The number and proportion of children living with their biological parents

Many children in South Africa do not live consistently in the same dwelling as their biological parents. This is a long-established feature of childhoods in South Africa, and is related to many factors including historic population control, labour migration, poverty, housing and educational opportunities, low marriage rates and cultural practice. It is common for relatives to play a substantial role in child-rearing. Many children experience a sequence of different caregivers, are raised without fathers, or live in different households to their biological siblings.

Virtually all children live with at least one adult, and the vast majority live in households where there are two or more co-resident adults. This indicator examines co-residence between children and their biological parents specifically. Although many children live with just one of their biological parents (usually the mother), this does not mean that the mother is a “single parent” as she is not necessarily the only adult caregiver in the household. In most cases, there are other adult household members such as aunts, uncles and grandparents, who may contribute to the care of children.

The proportion of children living with both parents decreased from 39% in 2002 to 35% in 2013. Thirty-nine percent of all children – more than seven million children – live with their mothers but not with their fathers. Only 3% of children live in households where their fathers are present and their mothers absent. Twenty-two percent do not have either of their biological parents living with them. This does not necessarily mean that they are orphaned: in most cases (83%), children without any co-resident parents have at least one parent who is alive but living elsewhere.

There is some provincial variation in these patterns. In the Western Cape and Gauteng, the proportion of children living with both parents is significantly higher than the national average, with around half of children resident with both parents (54% and 53% respectively). Similarly, the number of children living with neither parent is low in these two provinces (9% and 11%). In contrast, over a third of children (34%) in the Eastern Cape live with neither parent. These patterns are consistent from 2002 to 2013.

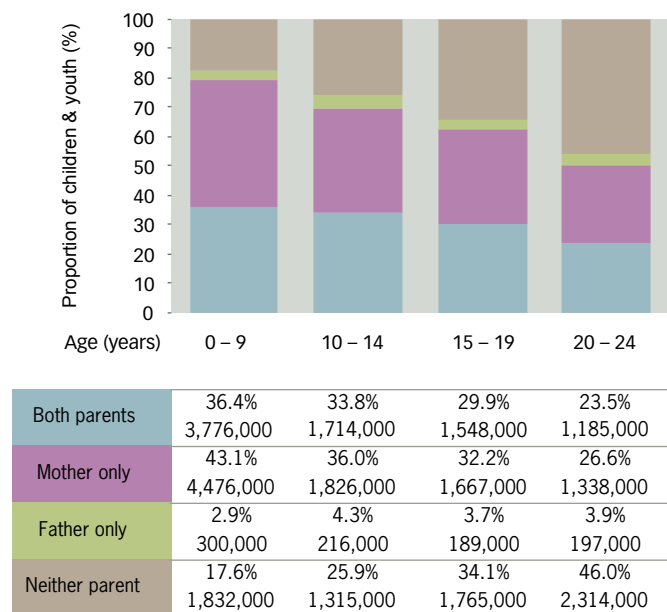
Children in the poorest 20% of households are least likely to live with both parents: only 19% have both parents living with them, compared with 73% of children in the least-poor 20% of households.

Less than one third (29%) of African children live with both their parents, while the vast majority of Indian and White children (84%

and 77% respectively) are resident with both biological parents. A quarter of all African children do not live with either parent and a further 42% of African children live with their mothers but without their fathers. These figures are striking for the way in which they suggest the limited presence of biological fathers in the domestic lives of large numbers of African children.

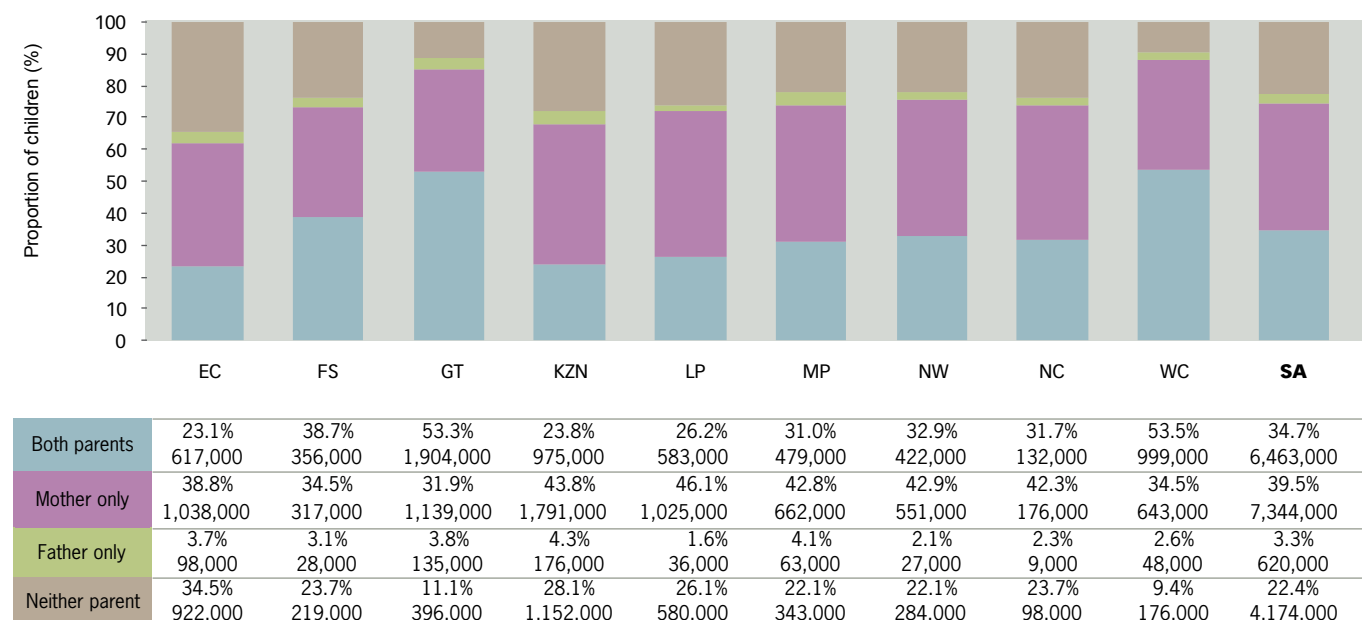
Younger children are more likely than older children to have co-resident mothers while older children are more likely to be living with neither parent. While over 80% of children aged 0 – 9 years were resident with at least one parent, just over half of young people in the 20 – 24 age group still live with at least one of their parents.

Figure 1a: Parental co-residence, by age, 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Figure 1b: Number and proportion of children living with their parents, by province, 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

The number and proportion of orphans living in South Africa

An orphan is defined as a child under the age of 18 years whose mother, father or both biological parents have died (including those whose living status is reported as unknown, but excluding those whose living status is unspecified). For the purpose of this indicator, orphans are defined in three mutually exclusive categories:

- A maternal orphan is a child whose mother has died but whose father is alive.
- A paternal orphan is a child whose father has died but whose mother is alive.
- A double orphan is a child whose mother and father have both died.

The total number of orphans is the sum of maternal, paternal and double orphans. This definition differs from those commonly used by United Nations agencies and the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA), where the definition of maternal and paternal orphans includes children who are double orphans.

In 2012, there were approximately 3.37 million orphans in South Africa. This includes children without a living biological mother, father or both parents, and is equivalent to 18% of all children in South Africa.

The total number of orphans has increased by 13% since 2002, with 380,000 more orphaned children in 2013 than in 2002. However, the rate of increase in orphaning has slowed in recent years, with a slight drop-off in the number of orphans since 2010/2011.

Orphan numbers do not indicate the nature or extent of care that children are receiving. It is important to disaggregate the total orphan figures because the death of one parent may have different implications for children than the death of both parents. In particular, it seems that children who are maternal orphans are at risk of poorer outcomes than paternal orphans – for example, in relation to education.³

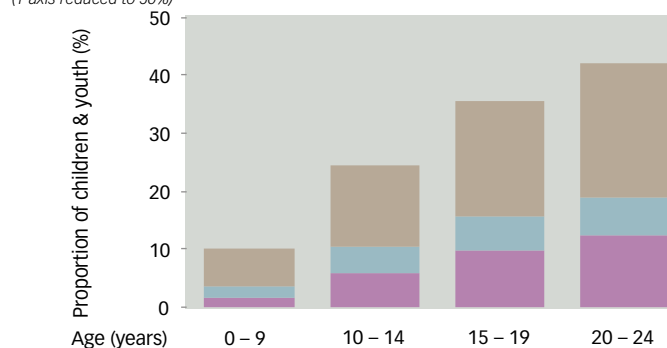
The vast majority (around 60%) of all orphans in South Africa are paternal orphans (with living mothers). In 2013, 3% of children were maternal orphans with living fathers, 11% were paternal orphans with living mothers, and a further 4% were recorded as double orphans. This means that 15% of children in South Africa did not have a living biological father and 7% did not have a living biological mother. The numbers of paternal orphans are high because of the higher mortality rates of men in South Africa, as well as the frequent absence of

fathers in their children's lives (1.4%, or 270,000 children have fathers whose vital status is reported to be "unknown", compared with only 0.2% or 34,000 children whose mothers' status is unknown).

The number and proportion of double orphans has more than doubled since 2002 (from approximately 360,000 to 770,000), translating to an increase of two percentage points in double orphans in South Africa (2002: 2%; 2013: 4%). These increases are likely to be driven primarily by AIDS. Three provinces carry particularly large burdens of care for double orphans: 6% of children living in KwaZulu-Natal have lost both parents. The proportion of children who have lost both parents in the Eastern Cape and the Free State is 5% and 7% respectively.

Figure 1c: Orphans, by age, 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 50%)

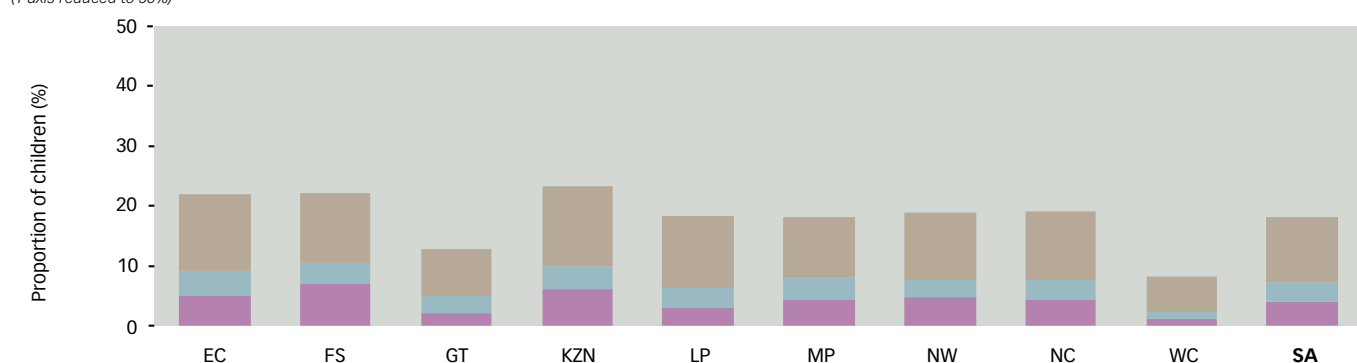


Double orphan	1.7%	6.0%	9.7%	12.4%
	178,000	305,000	503,000	624,000
Maternal orphan	1.8%	4.6%	6.0%	6.7%
	191,000	233,000	310,000	335,000
Paternal orphan	6.6%	14.0%	19.8%	23.0%
	684,000	708,000	1,024,000	1,159,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Figure 1d: Number and proportion of orphans, by province, 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 50%)



Double orphan	5.0%	7.1%	2.2%	6.1%	3.0%	4.5%	4.8%	4.5%	1.1%	4.1%
	134,000	65,000	79,000	249,000	68,000	69,000	62,000	19,000	21,000	765,000
Maternal orphan	4.1%	3.5%	2.7%	3.9%	3.4%	3.6%	2.8%	3.2%	1.3%	3.2%
	110,000	32,000	98,000	159,000	75,000	56,000	36,000	13,000	24,000	604,000
Paternal orphan	12.9%	11.6%	7.9%	13.3%	12.0%	10.1%	11.2%	11.5%	5.8%	10.7%
	345,000	106,000	283,000	542,000	267,000	156,000	143,000	48,000	108,000	1,999,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Throughout the period 2002 – 2013, roughly half of all orphans in South Africa have been located in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. KwaZulu-Natal has the largest child population and the highest orphan numbers, with 23% of children in that province recorded as orphans who have lost a mother, a father or both parents. Orphaning rates in the Eastern Cape and the Free State are similarly high, at 22% in each province. The lowest orphaning rates are in the Western Cape (8% of children have lost at least one parent) and Gauteng (13%).

The poorest households carry the greatest burden of care for orphans. Close to half (46%) of all orphans are resident in the poorest

20% of households. Around a quarter of children in the poorest 20% of households are orphans, compared with the richest 20% where total orphaning rates are around 3%.

The likelihood of orphaning increases with age. Across all age groups, the main form of orphaning is paternal orphaning, which increases from 7% in children under 10 years, to 23% among youth aged 20 – 24. Four percent of children under 10 have lost their mothers. This increases to 11% in children aged 10 – 14; 16% among children aged 15 – 19; and 19% in the 20 – 24 age group.

The number and proportion of children living in child-only households

A child-only household is defined as a household in which all members are younger than 18 years. These households are also commonly known as “child-headed households”.

There has been much concern within government and civil society that the number of children living in child-only households is escalating and that kinship networks are stretched to their limits. While orphaning undoubtedly places a large burden on families, there is little evidence to suggest that their capacity to care for orphans has been saturated, as commentators have feared. Rather than seeing increasing numbers of orphaned children living without adults, the vast majority of orphans live with family members, and child-headed households are not primarily the result of orphaning.⁴

There were about 85,000 children living in a total of 61,000 child-only households across South Africa in 2013. This equates to 0.5% of all children. While children living in child-only households are rare relative to those resident in other household forms, the number of children living in this extreme situation is of concern.

Importantly, however, there has been no significant change in the proportion of children living in child-only households in the period between 2002 and 2013, nor has there been any change in the proportion of child-only households over the same period. This is despite a marked increase in orphans in South Africa over the same period. Predictions of rapidly increasing numbers of child-headed households as a result of HIV are at this point unrealised. An analysis of national household surveys to examine the circumstances of children in child-headed households in South Africa reveals that most

children in child-only households are not orphans.⁵ These findings suggest that social phenomena other than HIV may play important roles in the formation of these households.

While it is not ideal for any child to live without an adult resident, it is positive that close to half (46%) of all children living in child-only households are aged 15 years and above. Children can work legally from the age of 15, and from 16 they can obtain an identity book and receive grants on behalf of younger children. Fifteen percent of children in child-headed households are under six years.

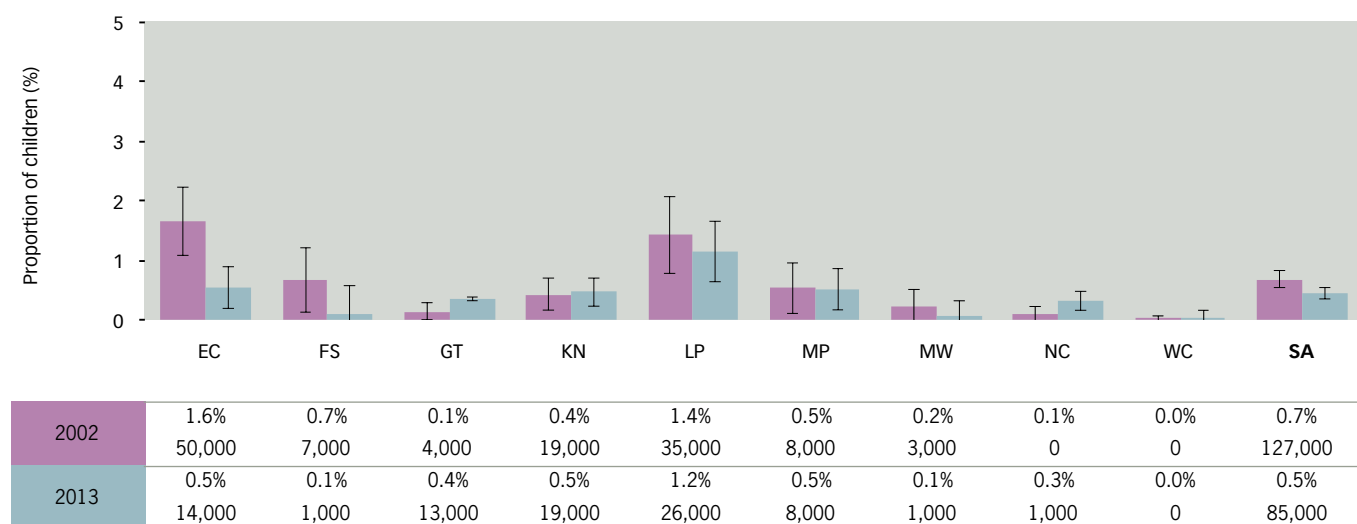
Research suggests that child-only households are frequently temporary arrangements, and often exist just for a short period, for example while adult migrant workers are away, or for easy access to school during term-time, or after the death of an adult and prior to other arrangements being made to care for the children (such as other adults moving in or the children moving to live with other relatives).⁶

Three-quarters of all children in child-only households live in three provinces: Limpopo (which accounts for 30% of children in child-only households), Eastern Cape (17%) and KwaZulu-Natal (23%). From 2002 to 2013, these provinces have consistently been home to the majority of children living in child-only households.

Relative to children in mixed-generation households, child-only households are vulnerable in a number of ways. Child-only households are predominantly clustered in the poorest 20% of households. In addition to the absence of adult members who may provide care and security, they are at risk of living in poorer conditions, with poor

Figure 1e: Number and proportion of children living in child-headed households, by province, 2002 & 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 5%)



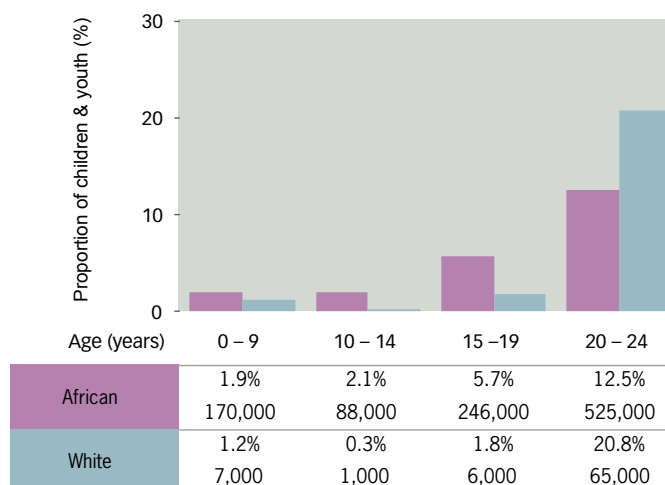
Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

access to services, less (and less reliable) income, and low levels of access to social grants.

There has been very little robust data on child-headed households in South Africa to date. The figures should be treated with caution as the number of child-only households forms just a very small sub-sample of the General Household Survey. In particular, we caution against reading too much into the provincial breakdowns, or into apparent differences between the 2002 and 2013 estimates.

Only 2% of young children under 10 years live in youth-headed households, which are defined as those whose oldest member is under 25 years. Amongst young adults in the 20 – 24 age group, 12% live in youth-headed households. Racial differences in membership of youth-headed households are likely to be linked to a number of factors including social mobility and resource availability, as well as necessity and preference. Amongst White youth aged 20 – 24 years (the majority of whom are in the wealthiest quintile), 21% live in youth-headed households. In contrast, only 13% of African youth are in youth-headed households. Membership of youth-headed households is much lower amongst Coloured and Indian/Asian youth (at 3% and 5% respectively), suggesting that few young people in these groups have moved out of the family household by the age of 24.

Figure 1f: Membership of youth-headed households, by age and race, 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

References

- 1 United Nations Children's Fund (1990) *First Call for Children. World Declaration and Plan of Action from the World Summit for Children*. New York: UNICEF.
- 2 Dorrington R (2013) *Alternative South African Mid-year Estimates, 2013*. Centre for Actuarial Research Monograph 13, University of Cape Town.
- 3 Ardington C & Leibbrandt M (2010) Orphanhood and schooling in South Africa: Trends in the vulnerability of orphans between 1993 and 2005. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 58(3): 507-536.
- 4 Meintjes H, Hall K, Marera D & Boule A (2010) Orphans of the AIDS epidemic? The extent, nature and circumstances of child-headed households in South Africa. *AIDS Care*, 22(1): 40-49.
- 5 See no. 4 above.
- 6 Hill C, Hosegood V & Newell M-L (2008) Children's care and living arrangements in a high HIV prevalence area in rural South Africa. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 3(1): 65-77.

Income poverty, unemployment and social grants

Katharine Hall and Winnie Sambu (Children's Institute, University of Cape Town)

The Constitution of South Africa, section 27(1)(c), says that “everyone has the right to have access to ... social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance”.¹

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 27, states that every child has the right “to a standard of living adequate for his or her development” and obliges the state “in case of need” to “provide material assistance”. Article 26 guarantees “every child the right to benefit from social security”.²

The number and proportion of children living in income poverty

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children living in households that are income-poor. These households fall below a specific income threshold. The measure used is a lower bound “ultra” poverty line, set at R322 per person per month in 2000 prices.³ The poverty line increases with inflation and was equivalent to R671 in 2013. Per capita income is calculated by adding all reported income for household members older than 15 years, including social grants, and dividing the total household income by the number of household members.

One way of identifying how many children are living without enough resources to meet their needs is to use a poverty line and measure how many children live under it. As money is needed to access a range of services, income poverty is often closely related to poor health, reduced access to education, and physical environments that compromise personal safety. A lack of sufficient income can therefore compromise children's rights to nutrition, education, and health care services, for example.

International law and the Constitution recognise the link between income and the realisation of basic human rights, and acknowledge that children have the right to social assistance (social grants) when families cannot meet children's basic needs. Income poverty measures are therefore important for determining how many people are in need of social assistance, and for evaluating the state's progress in realising the right to social assistance.

No poverty line is perfect. Using a single income measure tells us nothing about how resources are distributed between family members, or how money is spent. But this measure does give some

indication of how many children are living with severely constrained resources.

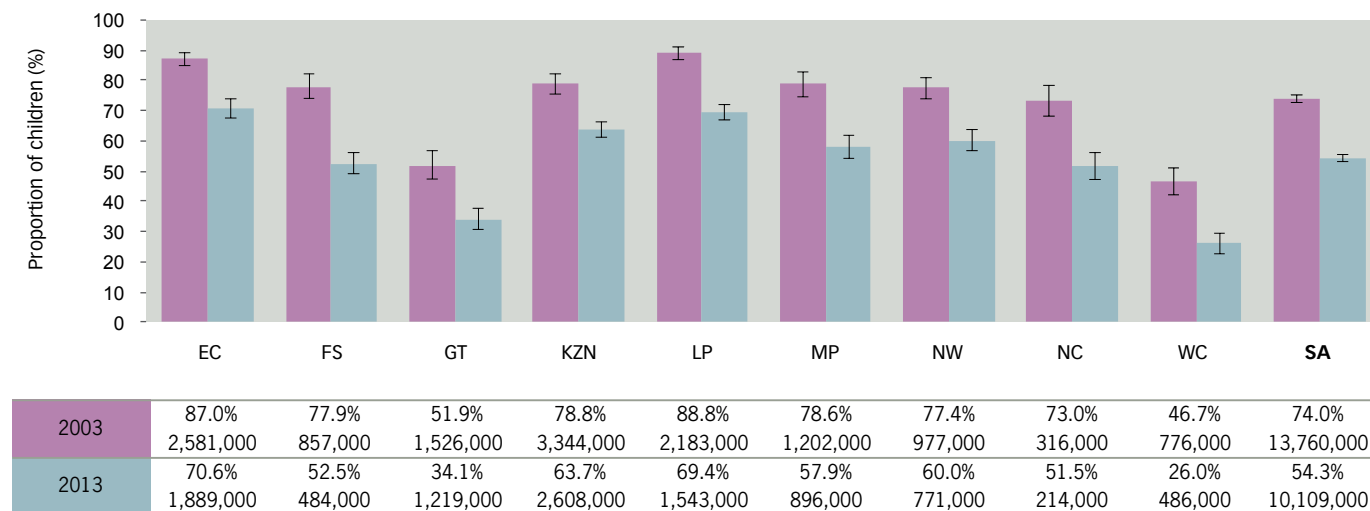
South Africa has very high rates of child poverty. In 2013, 54% of children lived below the lower poverty line (R671 per month). Income poverty rates have fallen consistently since 2003. This poverty reduction is largely the result of a massive expansion in the reach of the Child Support Grant over the same period. Although there have been reductions in child poverty, large numbers of children still live in extreme poverty: in 2013 over 10 million children lived below the “lower bound” poverty line.

There are substantial differences in poverty rates across the provinces. Using the lower poverty line, over two-thirds of children in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape are poor. Gauteng and the Western Cape have the lowest child poverty rates – calculated at 34% and 26% respectively.

There are glaring racial disparities in income poverty: while 61% of African children lived in poor households in 2013, only 3% of White children lived below this poverty line, and poverty rates for Coloured and Indian children were 28% and 6% respectively.

There are no significant differences in child poverty levels across gender or between different age groups in the child population. However a youth-centred analysis up to age 24 suggests that older youth (particularly those in the 20 – 24-year group) have slightly lower poverty headcounts than younger children. This may be because they are able to contribute to their own household income, even if in small ways, or that they live in smaller households.

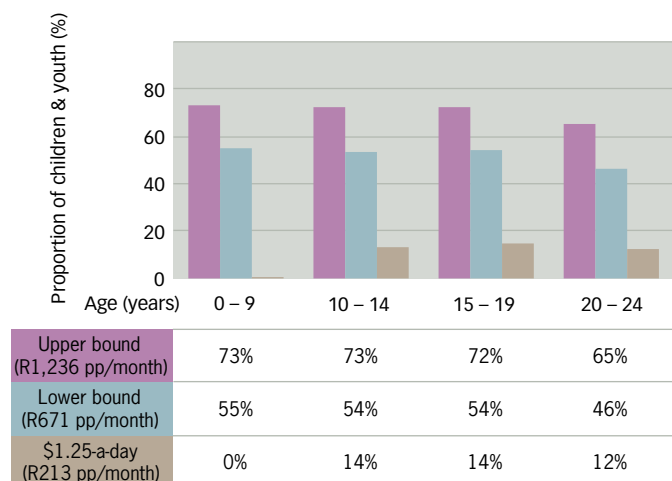
Figure 2a: Number and proportion of children living in income-poor households, by province, 2003 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Figure 2b: Poverty headcounts, by age, 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 80%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Other poverty lines can be used to analyse and compare different levels of income poverty. Statistics South Africa recently released three national poverty lines: a “food poverty line” set at R141 per person per month in 2000 prices (equivalent to R358 in 2013); a “lower bound line” at R209 in 2000 (equivalent to R495 in 2013); and an “upper bound line” at R308 in 2000 (equivalent to R692 in 2013).⁴ Child poverty rates, measured against these lines, are 30%, 43% and 55% respectively.

The international poverty line used to track progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is \$1.25 per person per day. This translates to R213 per person per month in 2013, using the International Monetary Fund’s purchasing power parity conversion.

The MDG goal was to reduce by half the number of people living below this poverty line. In 2003, 43% of children (eight million) lived below the MDG poverty line. By 2013 this had reduced to 14% (2.6 million). This poverty line is extremely low – below survival level – and is probably not appropriate for South Africa. See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for additional poverty lines.

The number and proportion of children living in households without an employed adult

This indicator measures unemployment from a children's perspective and gives the number and proportion of children who live in households where no adults are employed in either the formal or informal sector. It therefore shows the proportion of children living in "unemployed" households where it is unlikely that any household members get income from labour or income-generating activities.

Unemployment in South Africa continues to be a serious problem. The official national unemployment rate was 24.7% in the third quarter of 2013.⁵ This rate is based on a narrow definition of unemployment that includes only those adults who are defined as economically active (i.e. they are not studying or retired or for some reason voluntarily at home) and who actively looked but failed to find work in the four weeks preceding the survey.⁶ An expanded definition of unemployment, which includes "discouraged work-seekers" who were unemployed but not actively looking for work in the month preceding the survey, would give a higher, more accurate, indication of unemployment. Gender differences in employment rates are relevant for children, who are more likely to co-reside with their mother than their father. Unemployment rates remain considerably higher for women than for men.

Apart from providing regular income, an employed adult may bring other benefits to the household, including health insurance, unemployment insurance and maternity leave that can contribute to children's health, development and education. The definition of "employment" is derived from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey and includes regular or irregular work for wages or salary, as well as various forms of self-employment, including unpaid work in a family business.

In 2013, 69% of children in South Africa lived in households with at least one working adult. The other 31% (5.7 million children) lived in households where no adults were working. The proportion of children living in households where there is unemployment has decreased by 11% since 2003 when the proportion was 42%.

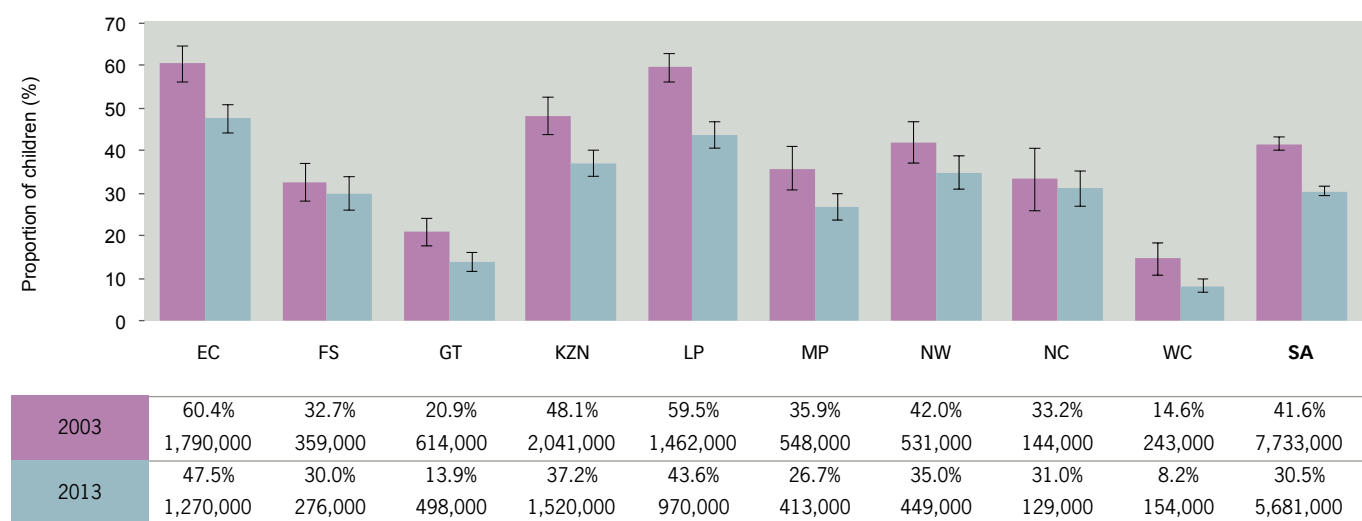
This indicator is very closely related to the income poverty indicator in that provinces with relatively high proportions of children living in unemployed households also have high rates of child poverty. Gauteng and the Western Cape have the lowest levels of income poverty, and less than 15% of children in these provinces live in unemployed households. In contrast, over 40% of children in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo live in households without any employed adults. These two provinces are home to large numbers of children, and have the highest rates of child poverty.

Racial inequalities are striking: 35% of African children have no working adult at home, while 12% of Coloured children, 6% of Indian children and 2% of White children live in these circumstances. There are no significant differences in child-centred unemployment measures when comparing age groups or sex. However, a youth-focused analysis suggests that young people aged 20 – 24 years are slightly more likely than younger children to live in unemployed households (73% in the 20 – 24 age group, compared to 68% in the 15 – 19 age group).

Income inequality is clearly associated with unemployment. Nearly 70% of children in the poorest income quintile (4.6 million) live in households where no adults are employed.

Figure 2c: Number and proportion of children in households without an employed adult, by province, 2003 & 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 70%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2004; 2014) *General Household Survey 2003; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

The number of children receiving the Child Support Grant

This indicator shows the number of children receiving the Child Support Grant (CSG), as reported by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) which disburses social grants on behalf of the Department of Social Development.

The right to social assistance is designed to ensure that people living in poverty are able to meet basic subsistence needs. Government is obliged to support children directly when their parents or caregivers are too poor to do so. Income support is provided through social assistance programmes, such as the CSG, which is an unconditional cash grant paid to the caregivers of eligible children.

Introduced in 1998 with a value of R100, the CSG has become the single biggest programme for alleviating child poverty in South Africa. Take-up of the CSG has increased dramatically over the past decade, and the grant amount is increased slightly each year to keep pace with inflation. At the end of March 2015, a monthly CSG of R330 was paid to over 11.7 million children aged 0 – 17 years. This was an increase of over half a million children (580,000) over a one-year period (11.1 million children received the CSG end of March 2014).

There have been two important changes in eligibility criteria related to the age and income thresholds. The first concerns age eligibility. Initially the CSG was only available for children aged 0 – 6 years. It was gradually extended to older children up to the age of 14. Since January 2012, following a second phased extension, children are eligible for the grant until they turn 18.

The second important change concerns income eligibility. From 1998, children were eligible for the CSG if their primary caregiver and his/her spouse had a joint monthly income of R800 or less and lived in a formal house in an urban area. For those who lived in rural areas or informal housing, the income threshold was R1,100 per month. This threshold remained static for 10 years until a formula was introduced for calculating income threshold – set at 10 times the amount of the grant. From April 2015 the income threshold is R3,300 per month for a single caregiver and R6,600 per month for the joint income of the caregiver and spouse, if the caregiver is married.

There is substantial evidence that grants, including the CSG, are being spent on food, education and basic goods and services. This evidence shows that the grant not only helps to realise children's right to social assistance, but is also associated with improved nutritional, health and education outcomes.⁷

Table 2a: Children receiving the Child Support Grant, by province, 2015

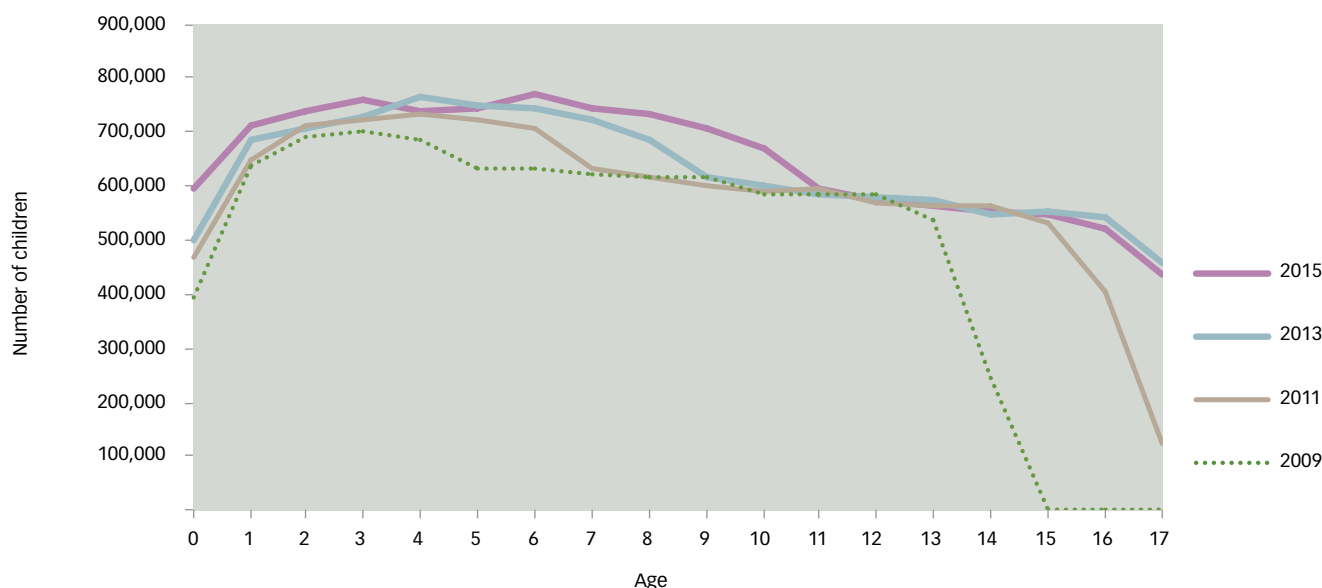
Province	2015
Eastern Cape	1,856,250
Free State	656,464
Gauteng	1,657,061
KwaZulu-Natal	2,775,481
Limpopo	1,699,494
Mpumalanga	1,034,942
North West	797,289
Northern Cape	290,497
Western Cape	935,687
South Africa	11,703,165
CSG amount	R 330

Source: South African Social Security Agency (2009 – 2015) SOCPEN database – special request. Pretoria: SASSA.

Note: SOCPEN figures are taken from the end of March each year (the financial year-end).

Given the positive and cumulative effects of the grant, it is important that caregivers access it for their children as early as possible. Yet an analysis of exclusions from the CSG found that uptake rates for eligible infants under a year were as low as 50% in 2011, up only three percentage points from 47% in 2008. Exclusion rates were found to be highest in the Western Cape and Gauteng.⁸ Barriers to uptake include confusion about eligibility requirements and the means test in particular; lack of documentation (mainly identity books or birth certificates, and proof of school enrolment, although the latter is not an eligibility requirement) and problems of institutional access (including the time and cost of reaching SASSA offices, long queues and lack of baby-friendly facilities). It is worth noting, however, that uptake has improved amongst children younger than two and children older than 15 over the last few years.

Figure 2d: Number of children receiving the Child Support Grant, by age, 2009 – 2013



Source: South African Social Security Agency (2015) SOCPEN database – special request. Pretoria: SASSA.

The number of children receiving the Foster Child Grant

This indicator shows the number of children who are accessing the Foster Child Grant (FCG) in South Africa, as recorded in the SOCPEN administrative data system of the SASSA.

The FCG is available to foster parents who have a child placed in their care by an order of the court. It is a non-contributory cash grant valued at R860 per month from April 2015. The grant was initially intended as financial support for children removed from their families and placed in foster care for protection in situations of abuse or neglect. However, it is increasingly used to provide financial support to caregivers of children who are orphaned. The appropriateness and effectiveness of this approach have been questioned.⁹

The number of FCGs remained stable for many years while foster care was applicable mainly to children in the traditional child protection system. Its rapid expansion since 2003 coincides with the rise in HIV-related orphaning and an implied policy change by the Department of Social Development, which from 2003 started encouraging family members (particularly grandmothers) caring for orphaned children to apply for foster care and the associated grant. Over the following five years the number of FCGs increased by over 50,000 per year as orphans were brought into the foster care system. The increases were greatest in provinces with large numbers of orphaned children: the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

However, by 2009 the foster care system itself was struggling to keep pace with the number of FCGs due to the required initial investigations and reports by social workers, court-ordered placements through a children's court, and additional two-yearly social worker reviews and court-ordered extensions. Neither the welfare services nor the courts had the capacity to keep up with the two-yearly extensions. SASSA, which administers the grants, is not allowed to pay the FCG without a valid court order or extension order.

Over 110,000 FCGs lapsed in the two years between April 2009 and March 2011 because of backlogs in the extensions of court orders.¹⁰ This is reflected on the graph (on the next page) as a leveling of FCGs, as new FCGs were still being processed during this period.

In 2011 a court-ordered settlement stipulated that the foster care court orders that had expired – or that were going to expire in the following two years – must be deemed to have been extended until 8 June 2013. This effectively placed a moratorium on the lapsing of these FCGs. As a temporary solution social workers could extend orders administratively until December 2014, by which date a comprehensive legal solution should have been found to prevent qualifying families from losing their grants in future.¹¹ No policy solution was developed by the 2014 cut-off date. Instead the Department of Social Development sought (and received) an urgent court order extending the date to the end of 2017.

Since 2011, the number of new FCGs appears to have declined, and there has been a substantial increase in the number of grants that terminate at the end of each year, when children turn 18. In March 2015, 499,800 FCGs were paid each month to caregivers of children in foster care, down from 512,000 in March 2013. Nearly half of all grants go to just two provinces: KwaZulu-Natal (119,000) and Eastern Cape (116,000). These are also provinces with large numbers of maternal and double orphans.

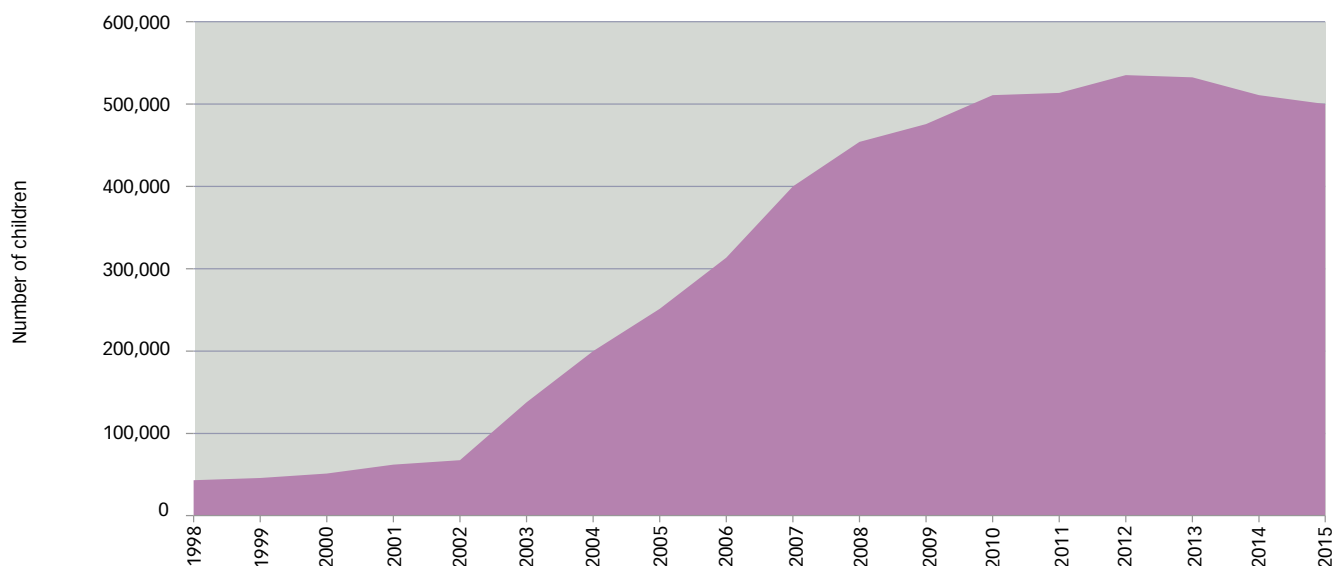
It is not possible to calculate a take-up rate for the FCG as there is no accurate record of how many children are eligible for placement in foster care – and indeed, no clear guidelines about how it should be targeted in the context of rising orphaning rates. The systemic problems which caused FCGs to lapse will be addressed through legislative amendment, which will need to clarify the eligibility criteria for foster care and the FCG.

Table 2b: Children receiving the Foster Child Grant, by province, 2012 – 2015

Province	Number of child beneficiaries at end March				Change 2012 – 2015
	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Eastern Cape	116,826	117,231	116,172	115,849	-977
Free State	43,311	41,317	39,178	37,985	-5,326
Gauteng	56,451	58,722	55,027	53,411	-3,040
KwaZulu-Natal	142,114	135,442	125,702	118,505	-23,609
Limpopo	56,066	58,953	58,571	57,694	1,628
Mpumalanga	32,886	35,359	33,877	34,260	1,374
North West	45,634	42,215	40,726	37,984	-7,650
Northern Cape	14,456	14,342	14,307	14,513	57
Western Cape	29,003	28,578	28,495	29,573	570
South Africa	536,747	532,159	512,055	499,774	-36,973
FCG amount	R 770	R 800	R 830	R 860	

Source: South African Social Security Agency (2015) SOCPEN database – special request. Pretoria: SASSA.

Figure 2e: Growth of the Foster Child Grant, 1998 – 2015



Sources: Department of Social Development (1998 – 2002) SOCPEN database – special request. Pretoria: DSD; National Treasury (2005) *Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review 2001/02 – 2007/08*. Pretoria: National Treasury; National Treasury (2008) *Estimates of National Expenditure 2008*. Pretoria: Treasury; South African Social Security Agency (2008 – 2015) SOCPEN database – special request. Pretoria: SASSA.

The number of children receiving the Care Dependency Grant

This indicator shows the number of children who are accessing the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) in South Africa, as recorded in the SOCPEN administrative data system of the SASSA.

The CDG is a non-contributory monthly cash transfer to caregivers of children with severe disabilities who require permanent care or support services. It excludes those children who are cared for in state institutions because the purpose of the grant is to cover the additional costs (including opportunity costs) that the parent or caregiver might incur as a result of the child's disability. The child needs to undergo a medical assessment to determine eligibility and the parent must pass an income or "means" test.

Although the CDG targets children with severe disabilities, children with chronic illnesses are eligible for the grant once the illness becomes disabling, for example children who are very sick with AIDS-related illnesses. Children with severe disabilities and chronic illnesses need substantial care and attention, and parents may need to stay at home or employ a caregiver to tend to the child. Children with health conditions may need medication, equipment or to attend hospital often. These extra costs can put strain on families that are already struggling to make ends meet. Poverty and chronic health conditions are therefore strongly related.

It is not possible to calculate a take-up rate for the CDG because there is little data on the number of children living with disabilities in South Africa, or who are in need of permanent care or support services. At the end of March 2015, 127,000 children were receiving the CDG. The grant was valued at R1,350 per month as from the beginning of April 2015.

The provincial distribution of CDGs is fairly consistent with the distribution of children. The provinces with the largest numbers of

children, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, receive the largest share of CDGs. There has been a consistent and gradual increase in access to the CDG since 2005.

Table 2c: Children receiving the Care Dependency Grant, by province, 2015

Province	2015
Eastern Cape	19,165
Free State	6,385
Gauteng	16,170
KwaZulu-Natal	36,471
Limpopo	13,266
Mpumalanga	9,572
North West	8,940
Northern Cape	4,787
Western Cape	12,021
South Africa	126,777
CDG amount	R 1,410

Source: South African Social Security Agency (2012 – 2015) SOCPEN database – special request. Pretoria: SASSA.

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Child health

Updated by Katharine Hall (Children's Institute), Nadine Nannan (Burden of Disease Research Unit, Medical Research Council) and Winnie Sambu (Children's Institute, University of Cape Town)

Section 27 of the Constitution of South Africa provides that everyone has the right to have access to health care services. In addition, section 28(1)(c) gives children "the right to basic nutrition and basic health care services".¹

Article 14(1) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states that "every child shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental and spiritual health".²

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child says that state parties should recognise "the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health". It obliges the state to take measures "to diminish infant and child mortality" and "to combat disease and malnutrition".³

The infant and under-five mortality rate

Nadine Nannan (Burden of Disease Research Unit, Medical Research Council)

The infant and under-five mortality rates are key indicators of health and development. They are associated with a broad range of bio-demographic, health and environmental factors which are not only important determinants of child health but are also informative about the health status of the broader population.

The infant mortality rate (IMR) is defined as the probability of dying within the first year of life, and refers to the number of babies under 12 months who die in a year, per 1,000 live births during the same year. Similarly, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) is defined as the probability of a child dying between birth and the fifth birthday. The U5MR refers to the number of children under five years old who die in a year, per 1,000 live births in the same year.

This information is ideally obtained from vital registration systems. However, like many middle- and lower-income countries the under-reporting of births and deaths renders the South African system inadequate for monitoring purposes. South Africa is therefore reliant on alternative methods, such as survey and census data, to measure child mortality. Despite several surveys which should have provided information to monitor progress, the lack of reliable data since 2000 led to considerable uncertainty around the level of childhood mortality for a prolonged period. However, the second South African National Burden of Disease Study has produced national and provincial infant and under-five mortality trends from 1997 up until 2010. These profiles can be viewed at: www.mrc.ac.za/bod/reports.htm.

An alternative approach to monitor age-specific mortality nationally since 2009 is the rapid mortality surveillance system (RMS) based on the deaths recorded on the population register by the Department of Home Affairs.⁴ The RMS data have been recommended by the Health Data Advisory and Coordinating Committee because corrections have been made for known biases. In other words, the

indicators shown in table 3a are nationally representative. The RMS reports vital registration data adjusted for under-reporting which allow evaluation of annual trends. They suggest the IMR peaked in 2003 when it was 53 per 1,000 and decreased to 29 per 1,000 in 2013. During the same period the U5MR decreased from 81 per 1,000 to 41 per 1,000, which equates to a 10% annual rate of reduction up until 2011, with no further noteworthy decline since 2012.

The neonatal mortality rate (NMR) is the probability of dying within the first 28 days of life, per 1,000 live births. The NMR was 11 per 1,000 live births in 2013. Estimates on the NMR are based on registered deaths for the period 2006 – 2013 and the District Health Information System for 2011 – 2013.

Table 3a: Child mortality indicators, rapid mortality surveillance, 2009 – 2013

INDICATOR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births	56	52	40	41	41
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	39	35	28	27	29
Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births	14	13	13	11	11

Source: Dorrington RE, Bradshaw D, Laubscher R & Nannan N (2014) *Rapid Mortality Surveillance Report 2013*. Cape Town: Medical Research Council.

Teenage pregnancy

This indicator counts young women aged 15 – 24 who are reported to have given birth to a live child in the past year.

Pregnancy rates are difficult to calculate directly because it is hard to determine how many pregnancies end in miscarriage, stillbirth or abortion: these are not necessarily known to the respondent, or accurately reported. In the absence of reliable data on pregnancy, researchers tend to rely on childbearing data (i.e. the proportion of women in an age group who have given birth to a live child).

Despite widespread assumptions that teen pregnancy in South Africa is an escalating problem, the available data suggest that the percentage of teenage mothers is not increasing. A number of studies have suggested a levelling off and even a decrease in fertility rates among teenagers in South Africa.⁵ Teenage fertility rates declined after the 1996 Census, and Department of Health data between 2004 and 2012 showed no increase in the share of teenagers aged 15 – 19 who attended antenatal clinics.⁶

Fertility rates are an indicator of possible exposure to HIV. HIV prevalence rates are higher among women in their late twenties and thirties, and lower among teenagers, and the prevalence rate in the 15 – 24-age group has decreased over the past 10 years. However prevalence rates are still worryingly high: of the young pregnant women surveyed in antenatal clinics in 2012, 12% in the 15 – 19-age group and 24% of those aged 20 – 24 were HIV positive.⁷ There is a strong association between early childbearing and maternal mortality, and the majority of deaths in young mothers are caused by AIDS.⁸ It is important that safe sexual behaviour is encouraged and practised.

Studies have found that early childbearing – particularly by teenagers and young women who have not completed school – has a significant impact on the educational outcomes of the mother and child, and is associated with poorer child health and nutritional outcomes.⁹ For this reason it is important to delay childbearing, and to ensure that teenagers who do fall pregnant are appropriately supported. This includes ensuring that young mothers can complete their education, and that they have access to parenting support programmes and health services. Although pregnancy is a major cause of school drop-out, some research has also suggested that teenage girls who are already falling behind at school are more likely to become pregnant than those who are progressing through school at the expected rate.¹⁰ So efforts to provide educational support for girls who are not coping at school may also help to reduce teenage pregnancies.

Poverty alleviation is important for both the mother and child, but take-up of the Child Support Grant among teenage mothers is low compared with older mothers.¹¹ This suggests that greater effort

should be made to assist young mothers to obtain birth certificates to apply for CSGs. Ideally, home affairs and social security services should form part of a comprehensive maternal support service at clinics and maternity hospitals.

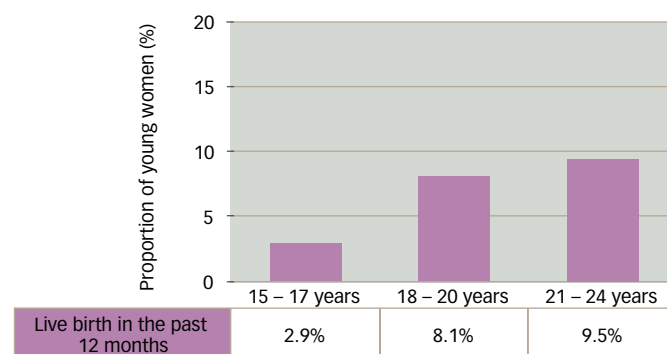
Since 2009 the nationally representative General Household Survey (GHS) conducted by Statistics South Africa has included a question on pregnancy. The question asks the household respondent: “Has any female household member [between 12 – 50 years] been pregnant during the past 12 months?” For those reported to have been pregnant, a follow-up question asks about the current status of the pregnancy. This indicator calculates the number and proportion of young women who have given birth in the past year.

According to the GHS the national childbearing rate for young women aged 15 – 24 was 7% in 2013. There has been no significant change in this rate since 2009 and the estimated number of young women giving birth in a year has remained stable at between 350,000 and 360,000.

As would be expected, childbearing rates increase with age. Less than three percent of girls aged 15 – 17 were reported to have given birth in the past 12 months (representing just under 50,000 teenagers in this age group). Childbearing rates increased to 8% among 18 – 20-year-olds (123,000 when weighted), and 9.5% in the 21 – 24 age group (188,000). These rates have also been stable over the five-year period that the GHS has included this question.

Figure 3a: Childbearing rate among young women aged 15 – 24 years, by age, 2013

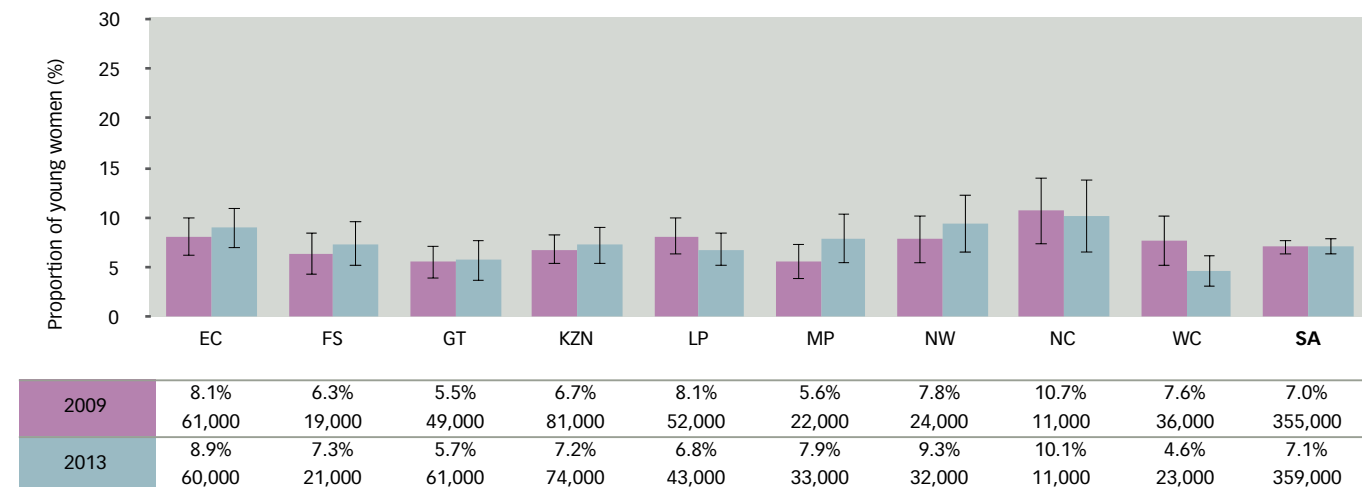
(Y-axis reduced to 20%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Figure 3b: Annual childbearing rates among young women aged 15 – 24 years, by province, 2009 & 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 30%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2010; 2014) *General Household Survey 2009; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

The number and proportion of children living far from their health facility

This indicator reflects the distance from a child's household to the health facility they normally attend. Distance is measured through a proxy indicator: length of time travelled to reach the health facility, by whatever form of transport is usually used. The health facility is regarded as "far" if a child would have to travel more than 30 minutes to reach it, irrespective of mode of transport.

A review of international evidence suggests that universal access to key preventive and treatment interventions could avert up to two-thirds of under-five deaths in developing countries.¹² Preventative measures include promotion of breast- and complementary feeding, micronutrient supplements (vitamin A and zinc), immunisation, and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, amongst others. Curative interventions provided through the government's Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy include oral rehydration, infant resuscitation and the dispensing of medication.

According to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, primary health care should be available (in sufficient supply), accessible (easily reached), affordable, and of good quality.¹³ In 1996, primary level care was made free to everyone in South Africa, but the availability and physical accessibility of health care services remain a problem, particularly for people living in remote areas.

Physical inaccessibility poses particular challenges when it comes to health services because the people who need these services are often unwell or injured, or need to be carried because they are too young, too old or too weak to walk. Physical inaccessibility can be related to distance, transport options and costs, or road infrastructure. Physical distance and poor roads also make it difficult for mobile clinics and emergency services to reach outlying areas. Within South Africa, patterns of health care utilisation are influenced by the distance to the health service provider: those who live further from their nearest health facility are less likely to use the facility. This "distance decay" is found even in the uptake of services that are required for all children, including immunisation and maintaining the clinic card (Road-to-Health booklet).¹⁴

Close to a quarter (23%) of South Africa's children live far from the primary health care facility they normally use, and over 90% attend the facility closest to their home. Amongst households with children,

only 9% do not usually attend their nearest health facility, and within the poorest 40% of households, only 4% do not use their nearest facility, while 15% of children in upper quintile households (the richest 20%) travel beyond their nearest health facility to seek care. The main reasons for attending a more distant health service relate to choices based on perceptions of quality: preference for a private doctor, long waiting times at clinics, non-availability of medicines.¹⁵

In total, 4.3 million children travel more than 30 minutes to reach their usual health care service provider. This is a significant improvement since 2002, when 37% (or 6.9 million children) lived far from their nearest clinic.

It is encouraging that the greatest improvements in access have been made in provinces which performed worst in 2002: the Eastern Cape (where the proportion of children with poor access to health facilities dropped from 55% in 2002 to 37% in 2013), KwaZulu-Natal (down from 49% to 33%), Limpopo (from 43% to 24%) and North West (from 39% to 29%) over the 12-year period. Provinces with the highest rates of access are the largely metropolitan provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape, at 9% and 8% respectively.

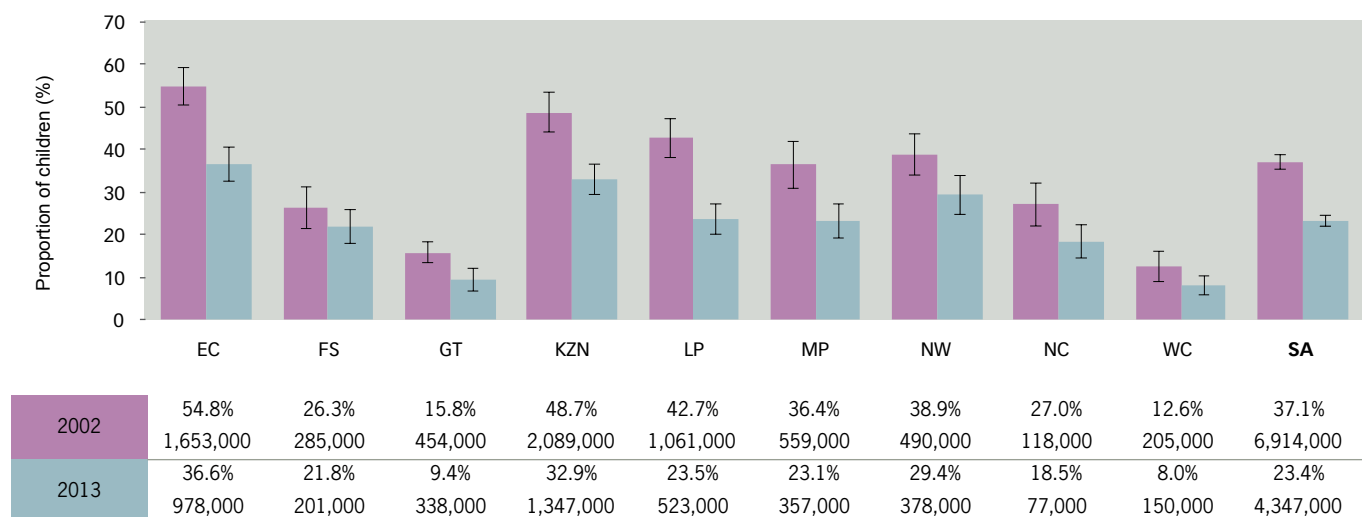
There are also significant differences between population groups. Over a quarter (26%) of African children travel far to reach a health care facility, compared with only 3 – 8% of Indian, White and Coloured children. Racial inequalities are amplified by access to transport: if in need of medical attention, 95% of White children would be transported to their health facility in a private car, compared with only 10% of African children and 27% of Coloured children.

Poor children bear the greatest burden of disease, partly due to poorer living conditions and access to services (water and sanitation). Yet health facilities are least accessible to the poor. Over a third of children (34%) in the poorest 20% of households have to travel far to access health care, compared with 7% of children in the richest 20% of households.

There are no significant differences in patterns of access to health facilities when comparing children of different sex. Similarly, there are no significant differences across the lower age groups, but those in the upper age group (20 – 24) are slightly less likely to have to travel far to reach health facilities.

Figure 3c: Children living far from their health facility, by province, 2002 & 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 70%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

The number and proportion of children living in households where there is reported child hunger

Section 28(1)(c) of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution gives every child the right to basic nutrition. The fulfilment of this right depends on children's access to sufficient food. This indicator shows the number and proportion of children living in households where children are reported to go hungry "sometimes", "often" or "always" because there isn't enough food. Child hunger is emotive and subjective, and this is likely to undermine the reliability of estimates on the extent and frequency of reported hunger, but it is assumed that variation and reporting error will be reasonably consistent so that it is possible to monitor trends from year to year.

The government has introduced a number of programmes to alleviate income poverty and to reduce hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity, yet 2.5 million children (14%) lived in households where child hunger was reported in 2013. There was a significant drop in reported child hunger, from 31% of children in 2002 to 16% in 2006. Since then the rate has remained fairly consistent, suggesting that despite expansion of social grants, school feeding schemes and other efforts to combat hunger amongst children, there may be targeting issues which continue to leave households vulnerable to food insecurity.

There are large disparities between provinces and population groups. Provinces with relatively large numbers of children and high rates of child hunger are the North West (21%), the Northern Cape (20%) and KwaZulu-Natal (18%), which together have over a million children living in households that report having insufficient food for children. These provinces consistently reported high rates of child hunger throughout the past decade, although the proportion of children experiencing hunger has declined substantially in all provinces over the period. The Eastern Cape has had the largest decrease between 2002 and 2013, with reported child hunger having

reduced by 34 percentage points over the 12-year-period. Limpopo has a large rural child population with high rates of unemployment and income poverty, yet child hunger has remained well below the national average, reported at 4% in 2013.

Hunger, like income poverty and household unemployment, is most likely to be found among African children. In 2013, some 2.4 million African children lived in households that reported child hunger. This equates to 15% of the total African child population, while relatively few Coloured (9%) children lived in households where child hunger was reported, and the proportions for Indian and White children were below 4%.

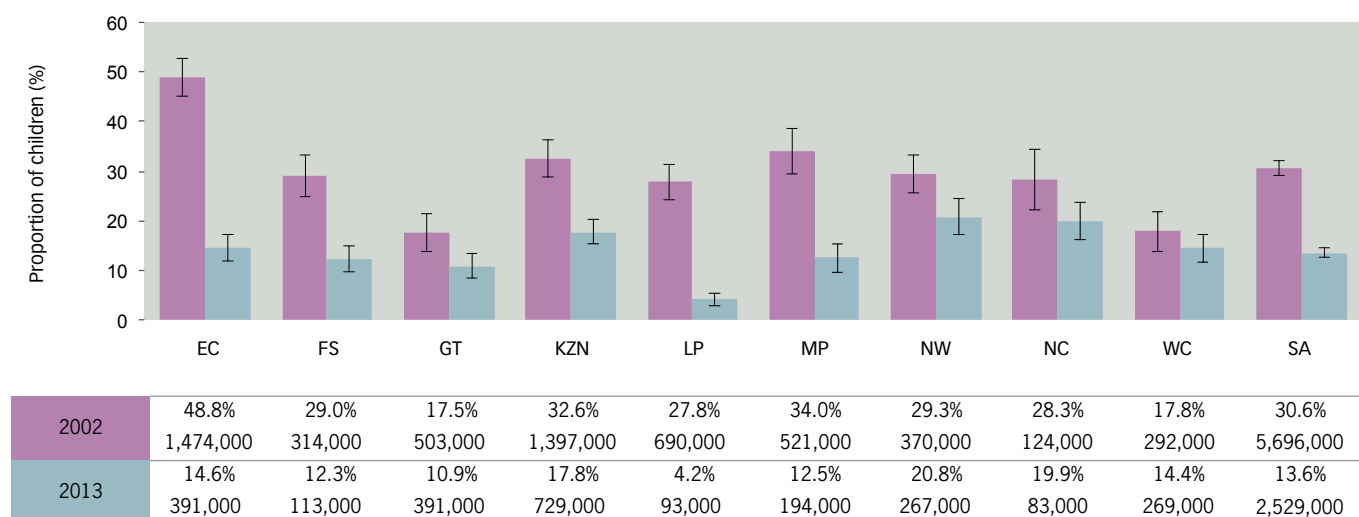
Although social grants are targeted to the poorest households and are associated with improved nutritional outcomes, child hunger is still most prevalent in the poorest households: 23% of children in the poorest quintile go hungry sometimes, compared with 1% in the wealthiest quintile of households.

There are no significant differences in reported child hunger across age groups. However, over 800,000 children aged less than five years are reported to have experienced child hunger. Young children are particularly vulnerable to prolonged lack of food. Inadequate food intake compromises children's growth, health and development, increases their risk of infection, and contributes to malnutrition. Stunting (or low height-for-age) indicates an ongoing failure to thrive. It is the most common form of malnutrition in South Africa and affects 25% of children under five.¹⁶

It should be remembered that this is a household-level variable, and so reflects children living in households where children are reported to go hungry often or sometimes; it does not reflect the allocation of food within households.

Figure 3d: Children living in households where there is reported child hunger, by province, 2002 & 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 60%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

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Children's access to education

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Section 29(1)(a) of the South African Constitution states that "everyone has the right to a basic education", and section 29(1)(b) says that "everyone has the right to further education", and that the state must make such education "progressively available and accessible".¹

Article 11(3)(a) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child says "States Parties to the present Charter shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realisation of this right and shall in particular ... provide free and compulsory basic education".²

Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises "the right of the child to education" and also obliges the state to "make primary education compulsory and available free to all".³

Number and proportion of children attending an educational institution

This indicator reflects the number and proportion of children aged 7 – 17 years who are reported to be attending a school or educational facility. This is different from "enrolment rate", which reflects the number of children enrolled in educational institutions, as reported by schools to the national Department of Basic Education early in the school year.

Education is a central socio-economic right that provides the foundation for life-long learning and economic opportunities. Children have a right to basic education and are admitted into grade 1 in the year they turn seven. Basic education is compulsory in grades 1 – 9, or for children aged 7 – 15. Children who have completed basic education also have a right to further education (grades 10 – 12), which the government must take reasonable measures to make available.

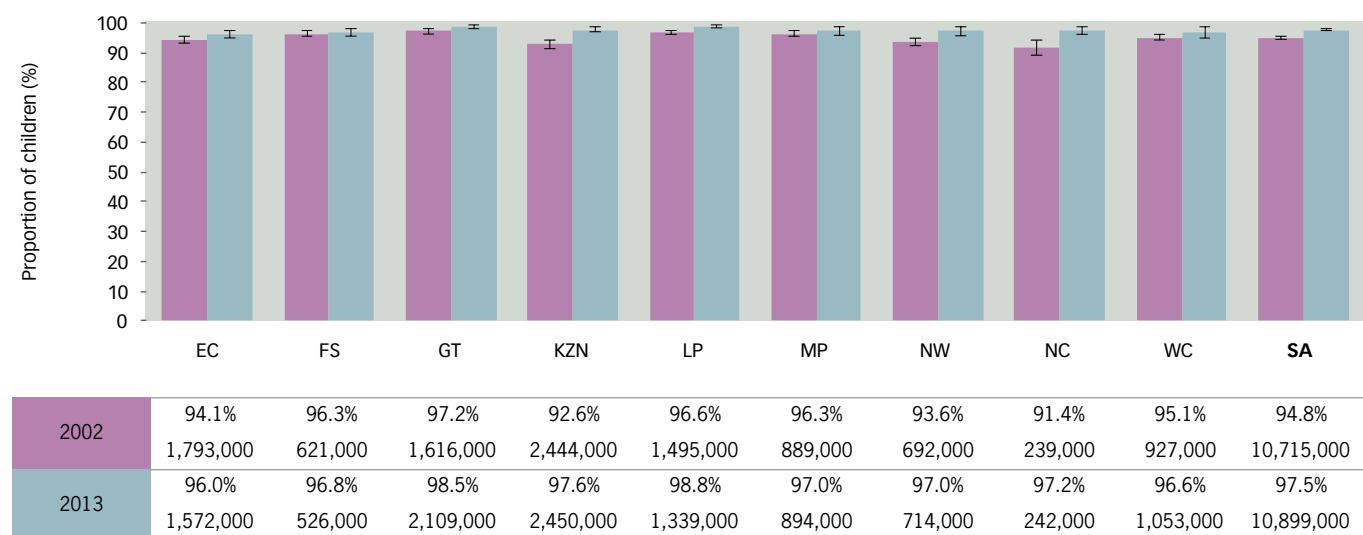
South Africa has high levels of school enrolment and attendance. Amongst children of school-going age (7 – 17 years) the vast majority (97%) attended some form of educational facility in 2013. Since 2002, the national attendance rate has seen a three percentage point increase. Of a total of 11.2 million children aged 7 – 17 years, 283,000 are reported as not attending school in 2013. At a provincial level, the Northern Cape, North West and KwaZulu-Natal have all seen significant increases in attendance rates. In the Northern Cape, attendance increased by six percentage points from 91% in 2002 to 97% in 2013. In KwaZulu-Natal, the attendance

increased from 93% in 2002 to 98% in 2013, while in the North West it increased by three percentage points in the same period. There has been a small but real increase in reported attendance rates for African and Coloured children over the 12-year period since 2002. Attendance rates for Coloured children remained slightly below the national average in 2013, at 95%.

Overall attendance rates tend to mask the problem of drop-out among older children. Analysis of attendance among discrete age groups shows a significant drop in attendance amongst children older than 14. Whereas 99% of children in each age year from seven to 13 are reported to be attending an educational institution, the attendance rate drops to 98% and 96% for 14- and 15-year-olds respectively. Schooling is compulsory only until the age of 15 or the end of grade 9, and the attendance rate decreases more steeply from age 16 onwards, with 95% of 16-year-olds, 90% of 17-year-olds, and 80% of 18-year-olds reported to be attending school (based on those who have not successfully completed grade 12).⁴

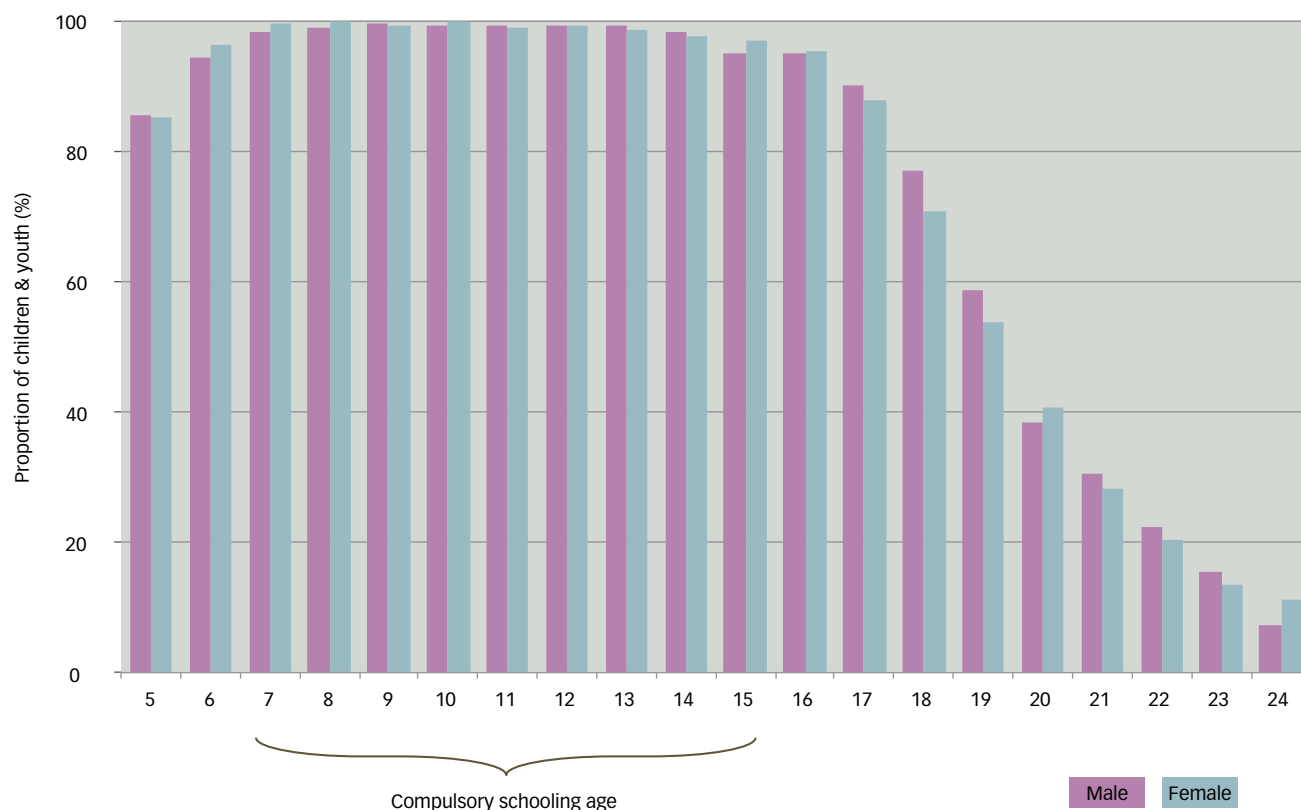
Education rates continue to decline in the youth age groups (15 – 19 years and 20 – 24 years), and are lowest (23%) for 20 – 24-year-olds. Although there are differences in school attendance rates between boys and girls in the upper teens, with boys more likely to be attending school, the difference is not significant if one excludes those who have successfully completed grade 12.

Figure 4a: School-age children (7 – 17-year-olds) attending an educational institution, by province, 2002 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003, 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Figure 4b: Reported attendance at an educational institution, by age and sex, 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Amongst children of school-going age who are not attending school the main set of reasons for non-attendance relate to financial constraints. These include the cost of schooling (18%), or the opportunity costs of education, where children have family commitments such as child minding (6%) or are needed to work in a family business or elsewhere to support household income (4%). The second most common set of reasons is related to perceived learner or education system failures, such as a perception that “education is useless” (14%), feeling unable to perform at school (7%), or exam failure (4%). Other reasons for drop-out are illness (7%) and disability (9%). Pregnancy accounts for around 9% of drop-out amongst teenage girls not attending school (or 5% of all non-attendance).⁵

Attendance rates alone do not capture the regularity of children's school attendance, or their progress through school. Research has shown that children from more “disadvantaged” backgrounds – with limited economic resources, lower levels of parental education, or who have lost one or both parents – are indeed less likely to enrol in school and are more prone to dropping out or progressing more slowly than their more advantaged peers. Racial inequalities in school advancement remain strong.⁶ Similarly, school attendance rates tell us nothing about the quality of teaching and learning.

There is little variation in school attendance rates across the income quintiles. Irrespective of whether children live in the poorest or wealthiest 20% of households, school attendance rates remain high – between 97% and 99%.

Access to early childhood learning programmes

This indicator reflects the number and proportion of children aged 5 – 6 years who are reported to be attending an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre or educational institution – in other words, those attending out-of-home care and learning centres. It includes those who attend ECD centres as well as those attending pre-grade R, grade R or grade 1 in ordinary schools. While all these facilities provide care and stimulation for early learning for young children, the emphasis on providing learning opportunities through structured learning programmes differs by facility type.

Educational inequalities are strongly associated with structural socio-economic (and therefore also racial) inequalities in South Africa.⁷ These inequalities are evident from the early years, even before entry into primary school. They are exacerbated by a very unequal schooling system,⁸ and are difficult to reverse. But early inequalities can be reduced through pre-school exposure to developmentally appropriate activities and programmes that stimulate cognitive development.⁹ Provided that they are of good quality, early learning programmes are an important mechanism to interrupt the cycle of inequality by reducing socio-economic differences in learning potential between children before they enter the foundation phase of schooling.

The Five-year Strategic Plan¹⁰ of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) includes a broad goal “to improve the quality of ECD” and specifically to improve access to grade R, through the supply of learning materials and improving the quality of grade R educators by 2020. The plan does not mention pre-grade R learning programmes, but current evidence suggests that quality group learning programmes are beneficial for cognitive development from about three years of age.¹¹ The DBE funds and monitors thousands of community-based grade R centres in addition to the school-based grade R classes. The National Planning Commission has proposed the introduction of a second year of pre-school education, and that both years be made universally accessible to children.¹² It therefore makes sense to monitor enrolment in early learning programmes of children in the 5 – 6-year pre-school age group.

In 2013, there were 277,736 “learners” attending 3,859 ECD centres in South Africa, according to the DBE’s administrative data.

The number of learners in the ECD centres rose by 5% between 2012 and 2013. The DBE snap survey counts another 822,731 learners attending grade R or pre-grade R at primary schools, of whom 94% were at public (government schools) while 6%, or 50,521, were at independent schools.¹³

In 2013, 91% of children (1.9 million) in the pre-school age group (5 – 6-year-olds) were reported to be attending some kind of educational institution. This was an increase of 36 percentage points since 2002, when 1.1 million were reported to be attending an educational institution.

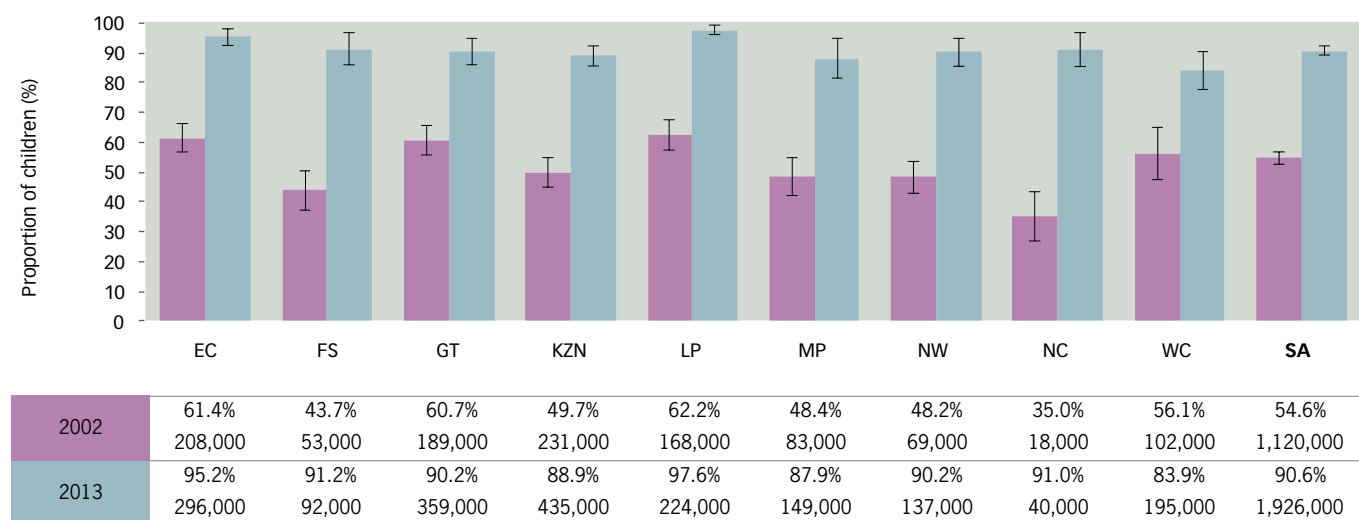
Of the 1.9 million 5 – 6-year-olds attending an educational institution in 2013, 37% (or 780,000 children) were already in grade 1.

Attendance rates are high across all provinces. The highest attendance rates in 2013 were in Limpopo (98%), the Eastern Cape (95%) and the Free State and Northern Cape provinces (both at 91%), while the lowest rates are in the Western Cape (84%). This pattern differs from many other indicators, where the Western Cape usually out-performs the poorer and more rural provinces like the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. Similar patterns were found in analyses of the 2007 Community Survey and the 2008 NIDS data.¹⁴

Given the inequities in South Africa, it is pleasing to see that there are no substantial racial differences in access to educational institutions by African and White children of pre-school age, although levels of enrolment among Coloured children remain below the national average, at 81%. It is also encouraging that, as with formal school attendance, there are no strong differences in pre-school enrolment across the income quintiles. As would be expected in the South African context, no gender differences in access to early learning are observed.

As with the indicator that monitors school attendance, it should be remembered that this indicator tells us nothing about the quality of care and education that young children receive. High rates of attendance provide a unique opportunity because almost all children in an age cohort can be reached at a particularly important developmental stage; but this is a lost opportunity if the service is of poor quality.

Figure 4c: School or ECD facility attendance among children aged 5 – 6 years only, by province, 2002 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2002; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: StatsSA.

Analysis by Katharine Hall and Winnie Sambo, Children’s Institute, UCT.

Note: Prior to 2009, enrolment in crèches, playgroups and ECD centres would have been under-reported as the survey only asked about attendance at “educational institutions”. More specific questions about ECD facilities were introduced in the 2009 survey, and are likely to have resulted in higher response rates.

For a more detailed technical explanation, see www.childrencount.ci.org.za.

Number and proportion of children living far from school

This indicator reflects the distance from a child's household to the school s/he attends. Distance is measured through a proxy indicator: length of time travelled to reach the school attended, which is not necessarily the school nearest to the child's household. The school the child attends is defined as "far" if a child has to travel more than 30 minutes to reach it, irrespective of mode of transport. Children aged 7 – 13 are defined as primary school age, and children aged 14 – 17 are defined as secondary school age.

Access to schools and other educational facilities is a necessary condition for achieving the right to education. A school's location and distance from home can pose a barrier to education. Access to schools is also hampered by poor roads, transport that is unavailable or unaffordable, and danger along the way. Risks may be different for young children, for girls and boys, and are likely to be greater when children travel alone.

For children who do not have schools near to their homes, the cost, risk and effort of getting to school can influence decisions about regular attendance, as well as participation in extramural activities and after-school events. Those who travel long distances to reach school may wake very early and risk arriving late or physically exhausted, which may affect their ability to learn. Walking long distances to school may also lead to learners being excluded from class or make it difficult for them to attend school regularly.

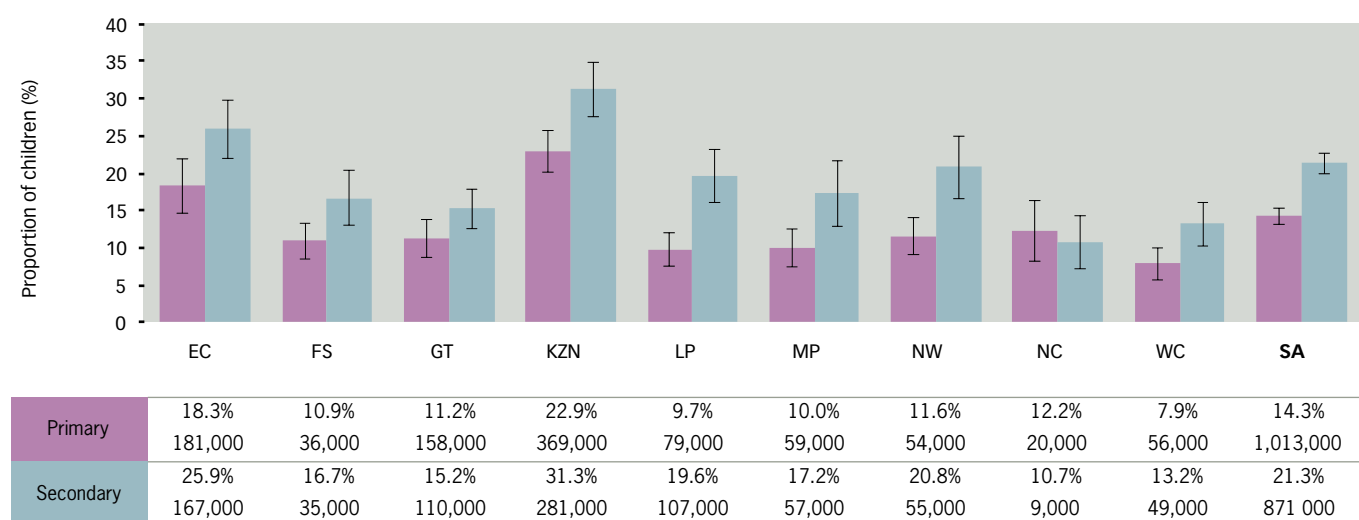
Close to three-quarters (72%) of South Africa's learners walk to school, while 8% use public transport. Only 2% report using school buses or transport provided by the government. The vast majority (84%) of White children are driven to school in private cars, compared with only 11% of African children.¹⁵ These figures illustrate pronounced disparity in child mobility and means of access to school.

Assuming that schools primarily serve the children living in communities around them, the ideal indicator to measure physical access to school would be the distance from the child's household to the nearest school. This analysis is no longer possible due to question changes in the General Household Survey. Instead, the indicator shows the number and proportion of children who travel far (more than 30 minutes) to reach the actual school that they attend, even if it is not the closest school. School-age children not attending school are therefore excluded from the analysis.

Overall, the vast majority (82%) of the 10.9 million children who attend school travel less than 30 minutes to reach school and most learners (85%) attend their nearest school. Children of secondary school age are more likely than primary school learners to travel far to reach school. In mid-2013 there were over seven million children of primary school age (7 – 13 years) in South Africa. Close to one million of these children (14%) travel more than 30 minutes to and from school every day. In KwaZulu-Natal this proportion is significantly higher than the national average, at 23%. Of the four million children of secondary school age (14 – 17 years), 21% travel more than 30 minutes to reach school. Physical access to school remains a problem for many children in South Africa, particularly those living in more remote areas where public transport to schools is lacking or inadequate and where households are unable to afford private transport for children to get to school.¹⁶ A number of rural schools have closed since 2002, making the situation more difficult for children in these areas. Nationally, the number of public schools dropped by 9% (over 2,000 schools) between 2002 and 2013, with the largest decreases in the Free State, North West and Limpopo. Over the same period, the number of independent schools has risen by 426 (37%).¹⁷

Figure 4d: School-aged children living far from school, by province, 2013

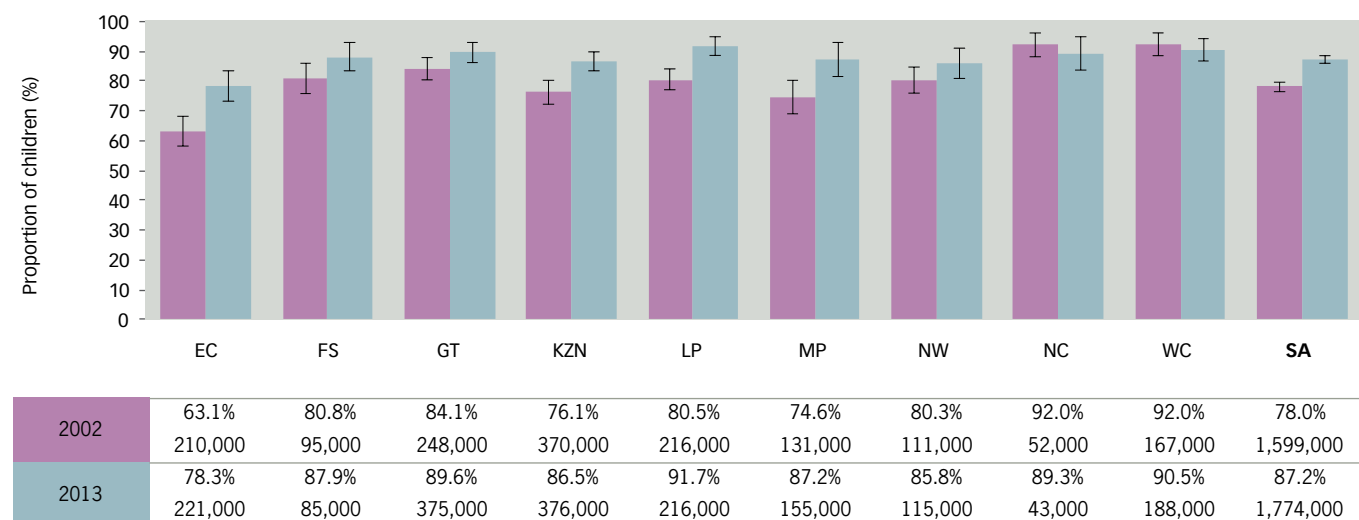
(Y-axis reduced to 40%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Children's progress through school

Figure 4e: Children aged 10 – 11 years who passed grade 3, by province, 2002 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Systemic evaluations by the Department of Education have recorded very low pass rates in numeracy and literacy amongst both grade 3 and grade 6 learners.¹⁸ Despite measures to address the inherited inequities in the education system through revisions to the legislative and policy framework and to the school funding norms, continued disparities in the quality of education reinforce existing socio-economic inequalities, limiting the future work opportunities and life chances of children who are born into poor households.¹⁹

Children are required to attend school from the year they turn seven, and to stay in school until they have completed grade 9 or reached the age of 15. School attendance rates are very high during this compulsory schooling phase. However, attendance tells us little about the quality of education that children receive, or how well they are progressing through the education system.

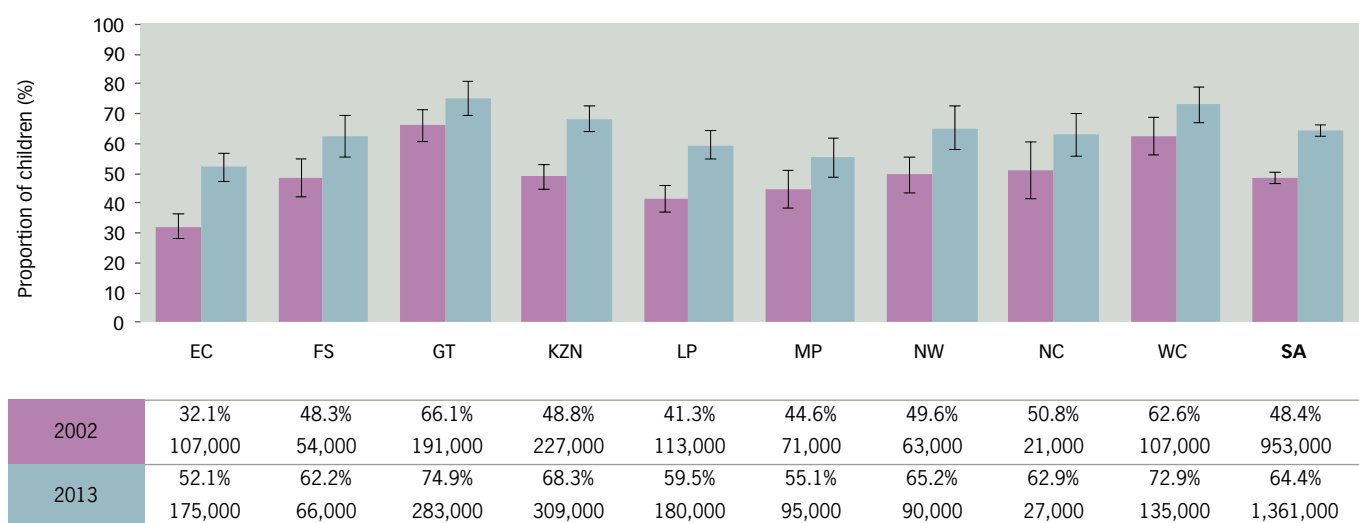
South Africa has poor educational outcomes by international standards and even within Africa,²⁰ and high rates of grade repetition have been recorded in numerous studies. For example, a study of children's progress at school found that only about 44% of young

adults (aged 21 – 29) had matriculated, and of these less than half had matriculated "on time".²¹ In South Africa, the labour market returns to education only start kicking in on successful completion of matric, not before. However it is important to monitor progress and grade repetition in the earlier grades, as slow progress at school is a strong determinant of school drop-out.²²

Assuming that children are enrolled in primary school at the prescribed age (by the year in which they turn seven) and assuming that they do not repeat a grade or drop out of school, they would be expected to have completed the foundation phase (grade 3) by the year that they turn nine, and the general education phase (grade 9) by the year they turn 15.

This indicator allows a little more leeway: it measures the number and proportion of children aged 10 and 11 years who have completed a minimum of grade 3, and the proportion of those aged 16 and 17 years who have completed a minimum of grade 9. In other words, it allows for the older cohort in each group to have repeated one grade, or more if they started school in the year before they turned seven.

Figure 4f: Children aged 16 – 17 who passed grade 9, by province, 2002 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

In 2013, 87% of all children aged 10 and 11 were reported to have completed grade 3. This was up from 78% in 2002. This improvement in progress through the foundation phase was evident across most of the provinces, with significant improvements in the Eastern Cape (from 63% to 78%), KwaZulu-Natal (from 76% to 87%) and Mpumalanga (from 75% to 87%). The best performing provinces in 2013 were Limpopo, Western Cape and the Northern Cape – although by 2013 provincial variation was not very pronounced. Only the Eastern Cape lagged behind, with 78% of its 280,000 children in this age group having completed the foundation phase.

As would be expected, the rate of progression through the entire general education and training band (grades 1 – 9) is lower, as there is more time for children to have repeated or dropped out by grade 9. Sixty-four percent of children aged 16 – 17 years had completed grade 9 in 2013. This represents an overall improvement of nearly 12 percentage points over the 12-year period, from 48% in 2002. Provincial variation is slightly more pronounced than for progress through the foundation phase: Gauteng had the highest rate of grade 9 progression (75%), followed by the Western Cape (73%). Progress was poorest in the Eastern Cape, where just over half (52%) of children had completed grade 9 by the expected age.

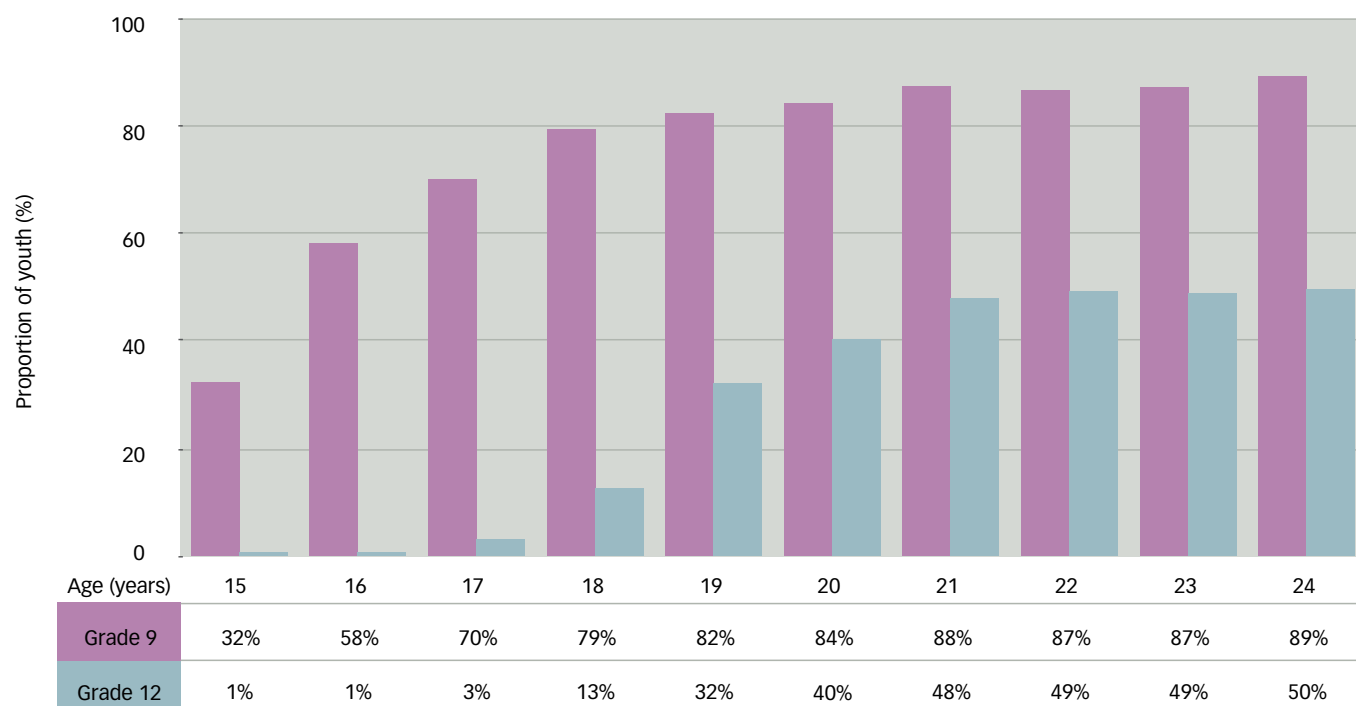
As found in other analyses of transitions through school,²³ educational attainment (measured by progress through school) varies along economic and racial lines. These differences become more pronounced as children advance through the grades. Gender differences in school progression, on the other hand, have remained consistent and even widened over the years: girls are more likely than boys to progress through school at the expected rate, and the

difference becomes more pronounced in the higher grades. In 2013, 90% of girls aged 10 – 11 had completed grade 3, compared with 84% of boys; in the same year, 71% of 16 – 17-year-old girls had completed grade 9, compared with only 58% of boys in the same age cohort. This finding is consistent with analyses elsewhere.²⁴

Amongst the 15 – 24 age group, reported pass rates for grades 9 and 12 do not increase after the age of 21. Only 58% of children aged 16 completed grade 9, and this increases to 70% at age 17. By age 24, about 90% of young people have completed grade 9, but only 50% have completed grade 12.

Of course, grade progression and grade repetition are not easy to interpret. Prior to grade 12, the promotion of a child to the next grade is based mainly on the assessment of teachers, so the measure may be confounded by the extent of the teacher's competence to assess the performance of the child. Analyses of the determinants of school progress and drop-out point to a range of factors, many of which are interrelated: there is huge variation in the quality of education offered by schools. These differences largely reflect the historic organisation of schools into racially defined and inequitably resourced education departments. Household-level characteristics and family background also account for some of the variation in grade progression. For example, the level of education achieved by a child's mother explains some of the difference in whether children are enrolled at an appropriate age and whether they go on to successfully complete matric.²⁵ This in turn suggests that improved educational outcomes for children will have a cumulative positive effect for each subsequent generation.

Figure 4g: Youth completion of grade 9 and grade 12, by age, 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013* Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

“NEETs” is a term used to describe young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training. The definition used here includes youth aged 15 – 24 who are not attending any educational institution and who are not employed or self-employed.

Widespread concerns about the large numbers of youth in this situation centre on two main issues: the perpetuation of poverty and inequality, including intergenerational poverty; and the possible implications of a large “idle” youth population for risk behaviour, social cohesion and the safety of communities.

Little is known about what NEETs actually do with their time. Young people who are neither learning nor engaged in income-generating activities may nevertheless be “productive” within their households, for example by helping maintain the home or looking after children and others in need of care. However, in the absence of income, NEETs remain dependent on the earnings of other household members, and on grants that are directed to children and the elderly. The Old Age Pension in particular has been found to support job-seeking activities for young people²⁶ and it has been argued that this unvisited expenditure of the grant could be addressed by extending social assistance to unemployed youth.²⁷

The large number of NEETs in South Africa is linked to underlying problems in the education system and the labour market. Young people in South Africa have very high participation rates in education, including at secondary level. But less than half successfully complete grade 12, and this reduces prospects for further study or employment.²⁸ Low-quality and incomplete education represent what are termed the “supply-side” drivers of youth unemployment, where young people do not have the appropriate skills or work-related capabilities to be employable or to set up successful enterprises of their own, and so struggle to make the transition from education to work.²⁹ The “demand-side” driver relates to a shortage of jobs or self-employment opportunities for those who are available to work.

In 2013 there were just over 10 million young people aged 15 – 24 in South Africa. Of these, 33% (3.3 million) were neither working nor enrolled in any education institution such as a school, university or FET college. The number of young people nationally who are not in education, training or employment has remained consistent over the last decade, but has increased over the two decades since 1996 when only two million NEETs were recorded.³⁰

The NEET rates are fairly even across the provinces. This is hard to interpret without further analysis. Limpopo, for example, is a very poor and largely rural province. It is possible that the slightly lower-than-average proportion of NEETs results partly from the fact that many

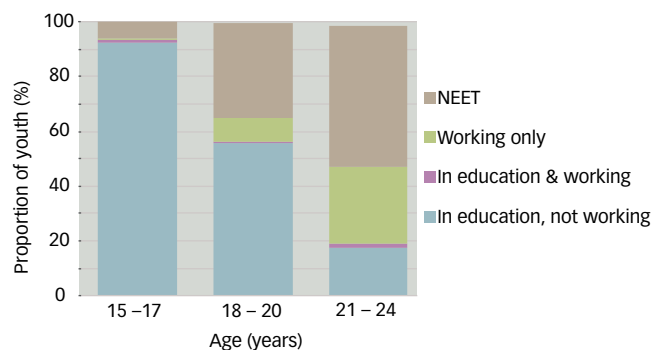
young people migrate to cities in search of work and are therefore counted among the NEETs in more urban provinces. It is possible that young people who are not employed in the labour market may nevertheless be employed in small-scale agriculture if their household has access to land, and this could also help to smooth the provincial inequalities that are characteristic of many other indicators.

The number and proportion of NEETs in KwaZulu-Natal has declined between 2002 and 2013. Again, this could be related to changing levels of productive activity, or to youth migration. While the proportion of NEETs has not changed substantially in Gauteng, the number of NEETs in that province has increased by over 20% (from 555,000 to 717,000) as the young population grows.

There is enormous variation within the broad youth group of 15 – 24 years. Only 6% of children aged 15 – 17 are classified as NEET because the vast majority are attending school. Within the 18 – 20 age band, educational attendance decreases to 56% and less than 10% are working. The remaining 35% are NEETs. In the 21 – 24 age band educational attendance decreases further to less than 20%, and the employment rate increases to 28%. Over half the young people in this age group are neither working nor in education.

While education attendance rates are fairly even for boys and girls, the gender disparity among NEETs becomes more pronounced with age. In the upper age band (21 – 24 years), 57% of young women are not in employment, education or training – compared with 46% of young men.

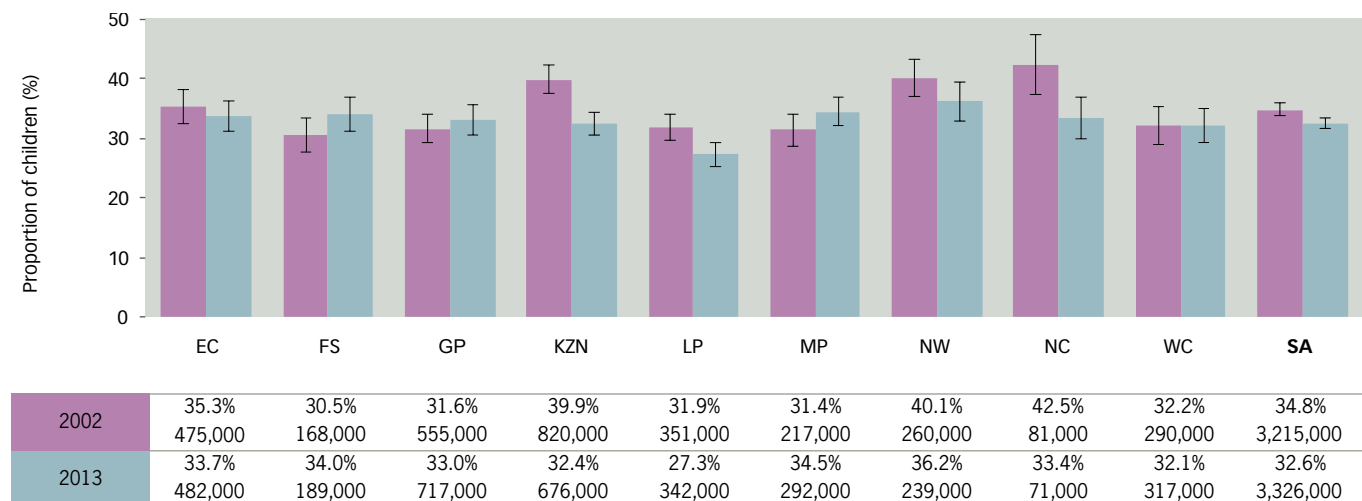
Figure 4h: Youth education and employment status by age, 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

Figure 4i: Youth (15 – 24 years) not in employment, education or training (NEETs), by province, 2002 & 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 50%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
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Children's access to housing

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Section 26 of the Constitution of South Africa provides that "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing", and section 28(1)(c) gives children "the right to ... shelter".¹

Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her development" and obliges the state "in cases of need" to "provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to ... housing".²

Distribution of children living in urban and rural areas

This indicator describes the number and proportion of children living in urban or rural areas in South Africa.

Location is one of the seven elements of adequate housing identified by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.³ Residential areas should ideally be situated close to work opportunities, clinics, police stations, schools and child-care facilities. In a country with a large rural population, this means that services and facilities need to be well distributed, even in areas which are not densely populated. In South Africa, service provision and resources in rural areas lag far behind urban areas.

The General Household Survey captures information on all household members, making it possible to look at the distribution of children in urban and non-urban households and compare this to the adult distribution. Nearly half of South Africa's children (45%) lived in rural households in 2013 – equivalent to 8.4 million children. Looking back over a decade, there seems to be a slight shift in the distribution of children towards urban areas: in 2002, 47% of children were found in urban households, and this increased to 55% by 2013.

A consistent pattern over the years is that children are more likely than adults to live in rural areas: In 2013, 68% of the adult population were urban, compared with only 55% of children.

There are marked provincial differences in the rural and urban distribution of the child population. This is related to the distribution of cities in South Africa, and the legacy of apartheid spatial arrangements, where women, children and older people in particular were relegated to the former homelands. The Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces alone are home to about three-quarters (74%) of all rural children in South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal has the largest child population and 2.5 million (61%) of its children are classified as rural. The province with the highest proportion of rural

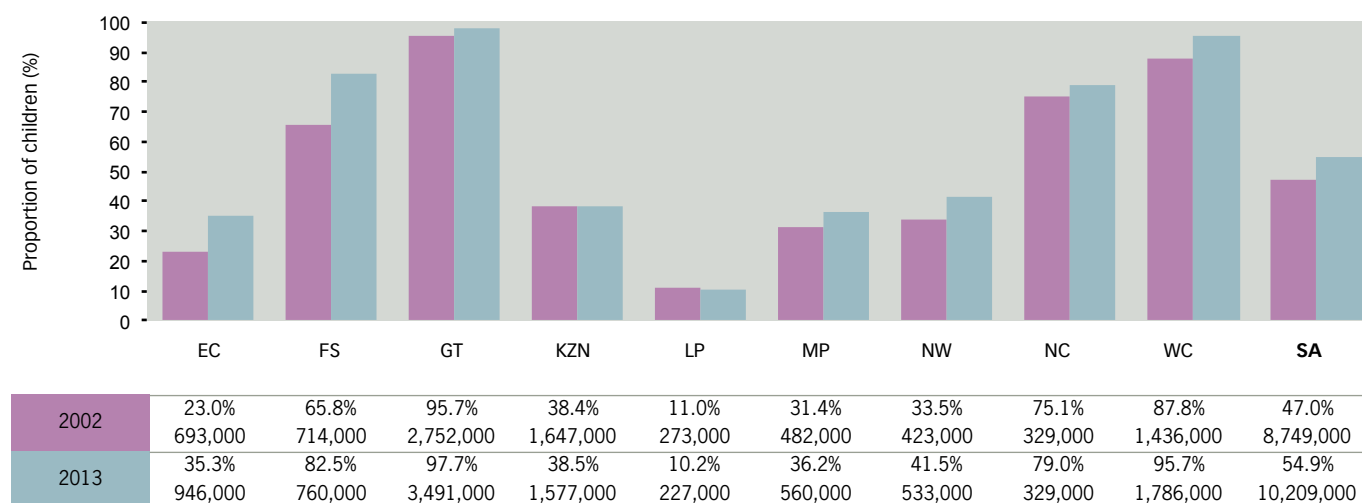
children is Limpopo, where only 10% of children live in urban areas. Proportionately more children (42%) live in the former homelands, compared with adults (29%), while 59% of adults live in urban formal areas, compared with 47% of children. Eight percent of children live in urban informal areas, and the remaining 3% live in "formal rural" areas – or mainly commercial farming areas. Over 99% of children living in the former homeland areas are African.

Children living in Gauteng and Western Cape are almost entirely urban-based (98% and 96% respectively). These provinces historically have large urban populations. The greatest provincial increase in the urban child population has been in the Free State, where the proportion of children living in urban areas increased from 66% of the child population in 2002 to 83% in 2013. In the Eastern Cape, the urban child population has increased by over 12 percentage points, signifying a possible urban trend.

Rural areas, and particularly the former homelands, are known to have much poorer populations. Children in the poorest income quintile are more likely to be living in rural areas (67%) than those in the richest quintile (8%). These inequalities also remain strongly racialised. Over 90% of White, Coloured and Indian children are urban, compared with 47% of African children.

Young people aged 20 – 24 are more urbanised than younger children, and more likely to live in urban informal settlements. Although the difference is only slight (10% of those in the 20 – 24-year-olds live in informal settlements, compared with 8% of those under 20 years) it is statistically significant. Fifty-four percent of children live in urban areas, while this increases to 64% in the 20 – 24-year age group. This is likely to be related to independent work-seeking or further education opportunities for young people over 20.

Figure 5a: Number and proportion of children living in urban areas, by province, 2002 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

The number and proportion of children living in adequate housing

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children living in formal, informal and traditional housing. For the purposes of the indicator, “formal” housing is considered a proxy for adequate housing and consists of: dwellings or brick structures on separate stands; flats or apartments; town/cluster/semi-detached houses; units in retirement villages; rooms or flatlets on larger properties. “Informal” housing consists of: informal dwellings or shacks in backyards or informal settlements; dwellings or houses/flats/rooms in backyards; caravans or tents. “Traditional dwelling” is defined as a “traditional dwelling/hut/structure made of traditional materials”. These dwelling types are listed in the General Household Survey, which is the data source.

Children’s right to adequate housing means that they should not have to live in informal dwellings. One of the seven elements of adequate housing identified by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is that it must be “habitable”.⁴ To be habitable, houses should have enough space to prevent overcrowding, and should be built in a way that ensures physical safety and protection from the weather.

Formal brick houses that meet the state’s standards for quality housing could be considered “habitable housing”, whereas informal dwellings such as shacks in informal settlements and backyards would not be considered habitable or adequate. Informal housing in backyards and informal settlements makes up the bulk of the housing backlog in South Africa. “Traditional” housing in rural areas is a third category, which is not necessarily adequate or inadequate. Some traditional dwellings are more habitable than new subsidy houses – they can be more spacious and better insulated, for example.

Access to services is another element of “adequate housing”. Children living in formal areas are more likely to have services on site and to live closer to facilities like schools, libraries, clinics and hospitals than those living in informal settlements or rural areas. Children living in informal settlements are also more exposed to hazards such as shack fires and paraffin poisoning.

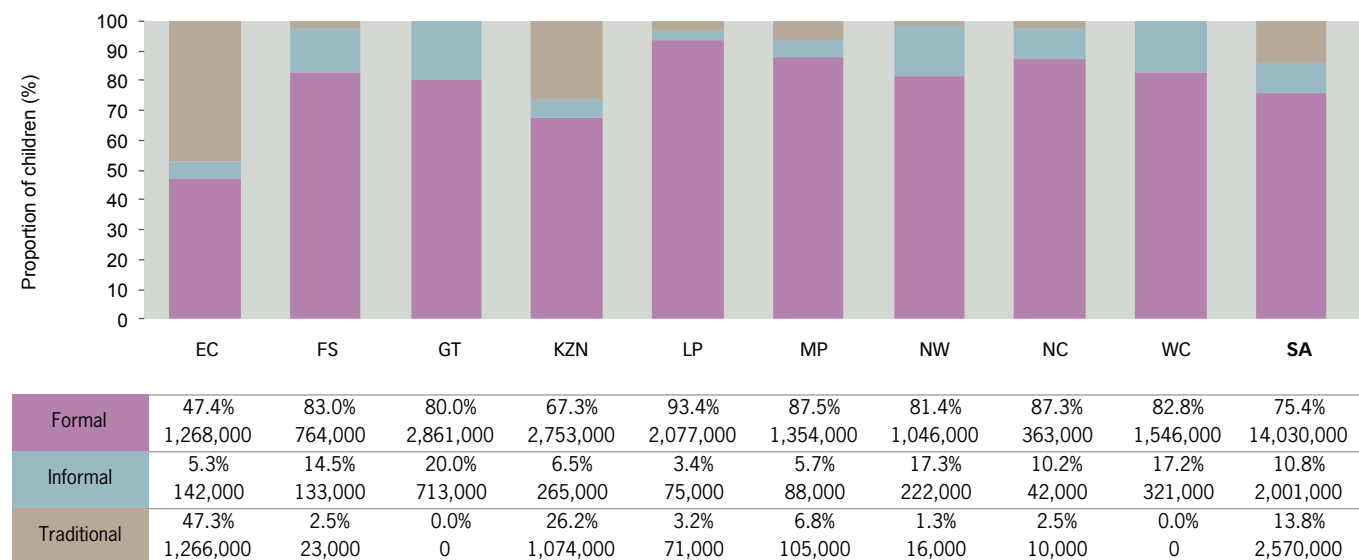
The environmental hazards associated with informal housing are exacerbated for very young children. The distribution of children in informal dwellings is slightly skewed towards younger children and babies: 42% of children in informal housing are in the 0 – 5-year age group. Of children under two years, 16% live in informal dwellings, after which the rate declines slightly with age. Nine percent of children over 10 years are informally housed. Given that this trend has remained consistent over a number of years, it seems likely that it is the result of child mobility or changing housing arrangements for children as they get older, rather than indicating an increase in informality over time.

In 2012, over two million children (11%) in South Africa lived in backyard dwellings or shacks in informal settlements. The number of children in informal housing has declined slightly from 2.3 million (12%) in 2002. The main provinces with informally-housed child populations are Gauteng (20% of children), North West (17%), and the Western Cape (17%). Limpopo has the lowest proportion (3%) of children in informal housing and the highest proportion (93%) in formal dwellings. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal have by far the largest proportions of children living in traditional dwellings (47% and 26% respectively).

The distribution of children in formal, informal and traditional dwellings has remained fairly constant since 2002. But racial inequalities persist. Almost all White children (98%) live in formal housing, compared with only 74% of African children. Access to formal housing increases with income. Virtually all children in the wealthiest 20% of households live in formal dwellings, compared with only two-thirds (66%) of children in the poorest quintile.

There are slight differences in the distributions of the 20 –24-age youth group and the younger age groups: young adults aged 20 – 24 years are less likely to be living in traditional dwellings, and more likely to live in informal dwellings. This makes sense given the similarly slight changes in area type distribution.

Figure 5b: Number and proportion of children living in formal, informal and traditional housing, by province, 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children’s Institute, UCT.

The number and proportion of children living in overcrowded households

Children are defined as living in overcrowded dwellings when there is a ratio of more than two people per room (excluding bathrooms but including kitchen and living room). Thus, a dwelling with two bedrooms, a kitchen and sitting-room would be counted as overcrowded if there were more than eight household members.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defines "habitability" as one of the criteria for adequate housing.⁵ Overcrowding is a problem because it can undermine children's needs and rights. For instance, it is difficult for school children to do homework if other household members want to sleep or watch television. Children's right to privacy can be infringed if they do not have space to wash or change in private. The right to health can be infringed as communicable diseases spread more easily in overcrowded conditions, and young children are particularly susceptible to the spread of disease. Overcrowding also places children at greater risk of sexual abuse, especially where boys and girls have to share beds, or children have to share with adults.

Overcrowding makes it difficult to target services and programmes to households effectively – for instance, urban households are entitled to six kilolitres of free water, but this household-level allocation discriminates against overcrowded households because it does not take account of household size.

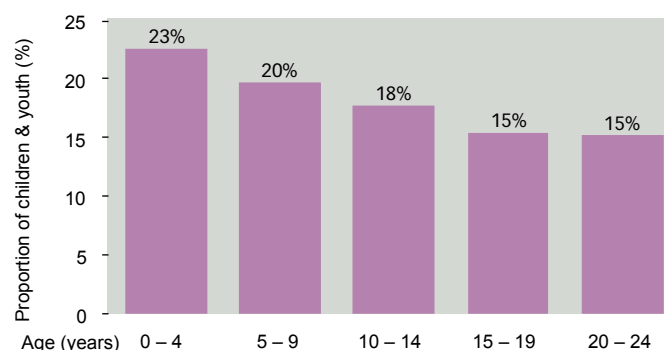
In 2012, 3.6 million children lived in overcrowded households. This represents 19% of the child population – much higher than the proportion of adults living in crowded conditions (11%).

Overcrowding is associated with housing type: 53% of children who stay in informal dwellings also live in overcrowded conditions, compared with 29% of children in traditional dwellings and 13% of children in formal housing.

There is a strong racial bias in children's housing conditions. While 21% of African and Coloured children live in crowded conditions, very few White and Indian children live in overcrowded households. Children in the poorest 20% of households are more likely to be living in overcrowded conditions (28%) than children in the richest 20% of households (1%).

Figure 5c: Proportion of children and youth living in overcrowded dwellings, by age group, 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 25%)



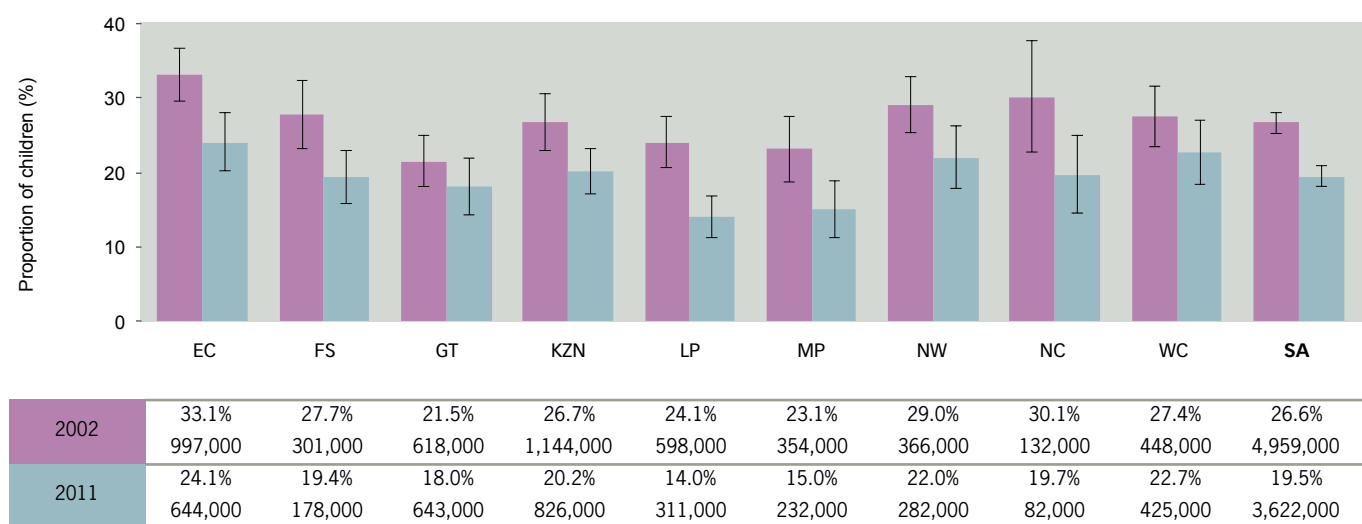
Source: Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Young children are significantly more likely than older children to live in overcrowded conditions. Twenty-one percent of children below two years live in crowded households, compared to 17% of children over 10 years. Younger children are also more likely than youth over 15 to live in overcrowded dwellings. This may again be related to some independent movement by young people (for example, to smaller households in informal areas).

The average household size has gradually decreased from 4.5 at the time of the 1996 population census, to around 3.6 in 2012, indicating a trend towards smaller households, which may in turn be linked to the provision of small subsidy houses. Households in which children live are larger than the national average. The average household size for adult-only households is two people, while the average household size for mixed generation households (i.e. those that include children) is five members.⁶

Figure 5d: Number and proportion of children living in overcrowded households, by province, 2002 & 2013

(Y-axis reduced to 40%)



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

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- 2 Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UN General Assembly resolution 44/25. Geneva: United Nations.
- 3 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1991) *The Right to Adequate Housing (art. 11 (1))*: 13/12/91. CESCR General Comment 4. Geneva: United Nations.

- 4 See no. 3 above.
- 5 See no. 3 above.
- 6 Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. [Analysis by K Hall & W Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT]

Children's access to services

Katharine Hall and Winnie Sambu (Children's Institute, University of Cape Town)

Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution of South Africa provides that "everyone has the right to have access to ... sufficient ... water" and section 24(a) states that "everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being".¹

Article 14(2)(c) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child obliges the state to "ensure the provision of ... safe drinking water".²

Article 24(1)(c) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that states parties should "recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health" and to this end should "take appropriate measures to combat disease and malnutrition ..., including the provision of clean drinking-water".³

The number and proportion of children living in households with basic water

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children who have access to a safe and reliable supply of drinking water at home – either inside the dwelling or on site. This is used as a proxy for access to adequate water. All other water sources, including public taps, water tankers, dams and rivers, are considered inadequate because of their distance from the dwelling or the possibility that water is of poor quality. The indicator does not show whether the water supply is reliable or if households have broken facilities or are unable to pay for services.

Clean water is essential for human survival. The World Health Organization has defined "reasonable access" to water as being a minimum of 20 litres per person per day.⁴ The 20-litre minimum is linked to the estimated average consumption when people rely on communal facilities and need to carry their own water for drinking, cooking and the most basic personal hygiene. It does not allow for bathing, showering, washing clothes or any domestic cleaning.⁵ The water needs to be supplied close to the home, as households that travel long distances to collect water often struggle to meet their basic daily quota. This can compromise children's health and hygiene.

Young children are particularly vulnerable to diseases associated with poor water quality. Gastro-intestinal infections with associated diarrhoea and dehydration are a significant contributor to the high child mortality rate in South Africa,⁶ and intermittent outbreaks of cholera. Lack of access to adequate water is closely related to poor sanitation and hygiene. In addition, children may be responsible for fetching and carrying water to their homes from communal taps, or

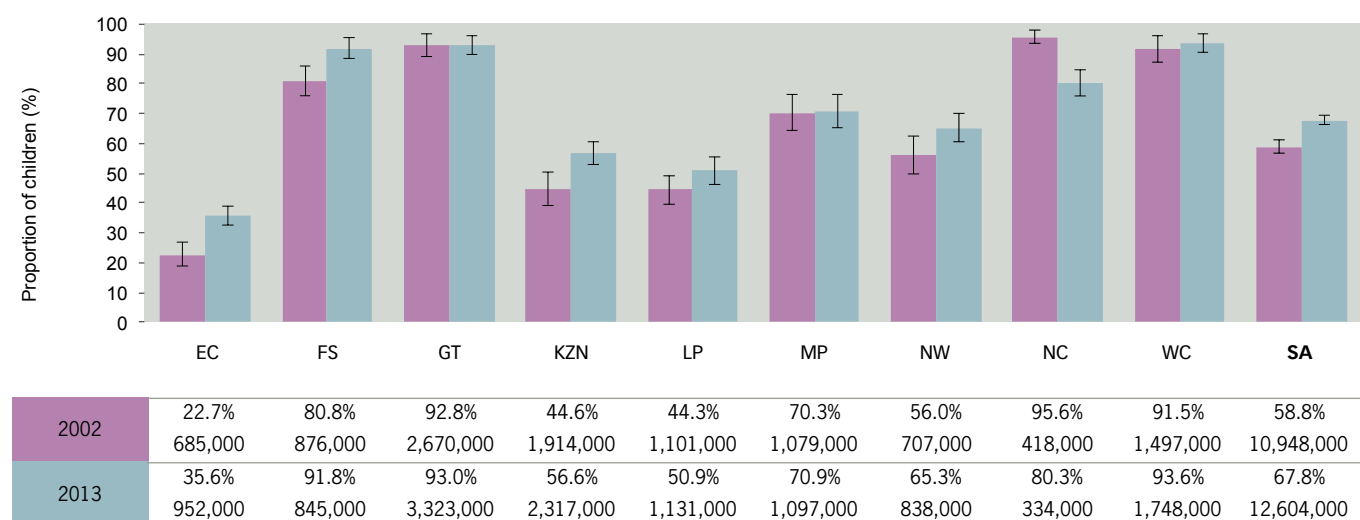
rivers and streams. Carrying water is a physical burden which can lead to back problems or injury from falls. It can also reduce time spent on education and other activities, and can place children at personal risk.⁷ For purposes of the child-centred indicator, therefore, adequacy is limited to a safe water source on site.

Close to six million children live in households that do not have access to clean drinking water on site. In 2013, over three-quarters (76%) of adults lived in households with drinking water on site – a significantly higher proportion than children (68%). A year-on-year comparison from 2002 – 2013 suggests that there has been little improvement in children's access to water over this period.

Provincial differences are striking. Over 90% of children in the Free State, Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces have an adequate supply of drinking water. However, access to water remains poor in KwaZulu-Natal (57%), Limpopo (51%) and the Eastern Cape (36%). The Eastern Cape appears to have experienced the greatest improvement in water provisioning since 2002 (when only 23% of children had water on site). The significant decline in access to water in the Northern Cape may represent a deterioration in water access, or may be the result of weighting a very small child population.

Children living in formal areas are more likely to have services on site than those living in informal settlements or in the rural former homelands. While the majority (78%) of children in formal dwellings have access, it decreases to 62% for children living in informal dwellings. Only 17% of children living in traditional housing have clean water available on the property.

Figure 6a: Number and proportion of children in households with water on site, by province, 2002 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

The vast majority of children living in traditional dwellings are African, so there is a pronounced racial inequality in access to water. Slightly over 60% of African children had clean water on site in 2012, while over 95% of all other population groups had clean drinking water at home.

Inequality in access to safe water is also pronounced when the data are disaggregated by income category. Amongst children in the poorest 20% of households, only 49% have access to water on site,

while 97% of those in the richest 20% of households have this level of service. In this way, inequalities are reinforced: the poorest children are most at risk of diseases associated with poor water quality, and the associated setbacks in their development.

While there are no significant differences in access to water across younger age groups, a higher proportion of young people aged 20 – 24 have access to adequate water. This could be related to the larger urban share in the oldest age group.

The number and proportion of children living with basic sanitation

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children living in households with basic sanitation. Adequate toilet facilities are used as proxy for basic sanitation. This includes flush toilets and ventilated pit latrines that dispose of waste safely and that are within or near a house. Inadequate toilet facilities include pit latrines that are not ventilated, chemical toilets, bucket toilets, or no toilet facility at all.

A basic sanitation facility is defined in the government's *Strategic Framework for Water Services* as the infrastructure necessary to provide a sanitation facility which is "safe, reliable, private, protected from the weather and ventilated, keeps smells to a minimum, is easy to keep clean, minimises the risk of the spread of sanitation-related diseases by facilitating the appropriate control of disease carrying flies and pests, and enables safe and appropriate treatment and/or removal of human waste and wastewater in an environmentally sound manner".⁸

Adequate sanitation prevents the spread of disease and promotes health through safe and hygienic waste disposal. To do this, sanitation systems must break the cycle of disease. For example the toilet lid and fly screen in a ventilated pit latrine stop flies reaching human faeces and spreading disease. Good sanitation is not simply about access to a particular type of toilet. It is equally dependent on the safe use and maintenance of that technology; otherwise toilets break down, smell bad, attract insects and spread germs.

Good sanitation is essential for safe and healthy childhoods. It is very difficult to maintain good hygiene without water and toilets. Poor sanitation is associated with diarrhoea, cholera, malaria, bilharzia, worm infestations, eye infections and skin disease which compromise children's health and nutritional status. Using public toilets and the open *veld* (fields) can also put children in physical danger. The use of the open *veld* and bucket toilets is also likely to compromise water quality in the area and to contribute to the spread of disease. Poor sanitation undermines children's health, safety and dignity.

The data show a gradual and significant improvement in children's access to sanitation over the 12-year period 2002 – 2013, although

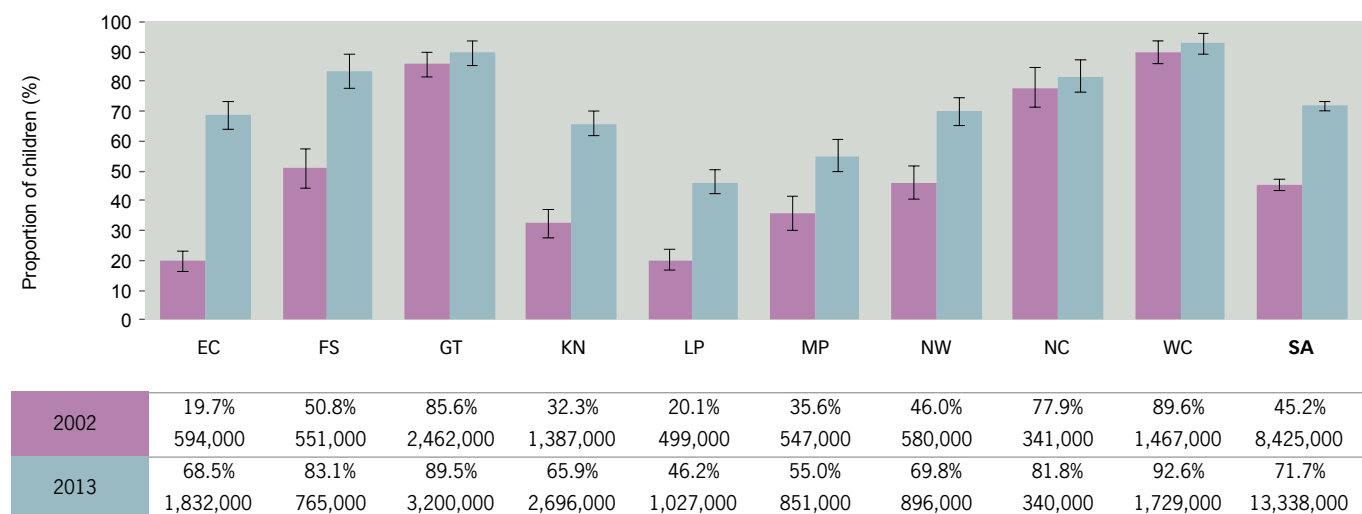
the proportion of children without adequate toilet facilities remains worryingly high. In 2002 less than half of all children (45%) had access to adequate sanitation. By 2013 the proportion of children with adequate toilets had risen by over 20 percentage points to 72%. But close to four million children still use unventilated pit latrines or buckets, despite the state's reiterated goals to provide adequate sanitation to all, and to eradicate the bucket system. Children (28%) are more likely than adults (22%) to live in households without adequate sanitation facilities.

As with other indicators of living environments, there are great provincial disparities. In provinces with large metropolitan populations, like Gauteng and the Western Cape, over 90% of children have access to adequate sanitation, while provinces with large rural populations have the poorest sanitation. The provinces with the greatest improvements in sanitation services are the Eastern Cape (where the number of children with access to adequate sanitation more than tripled from 0.6 million to 1.8 million over 12 years), KwaZulu-Natal (an increase of over 1.3 million children with adequate sanitation) and the Free State (where the proportion of children with sanitation improved from 51% in 2002 to 83% in 2013).

Although there have also been significant improvements in sanitation provision in Limpopo, this province still lags behind, with only 46% of children living in households with adequate sanitation in 2013. It is unclear why the vast majority of children in Limpopo are reported to live in formal houses, yet access to basic sanitation is the poorest of all the provinces. Definitions of adequate housing such as those in the UN-HABITAT and South Africa's National Housing Code include a minimum quality for basic services, including sanitation.

The statistics on basic sanitation provide yet another example of persistent racial inequality: Over 95% of Indian, White and Coloured children had access to adequate toilets in 2013, while only 67% of African children had access to basic sanitation. This is a marked improvement from 36% of African children in 2002.

Figure 6b: Number and proportion of children living in households with basic sanitation, by province, 2002 & 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2014) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Children in relatively well-off households have better levels of access to sanitation than poorer children. Amongst the richest 20% of households, 97% of children have adequate sanitation, while only 60% of children in the poorest 20% of households have this level of service.

Due to the different distributions of children and adults across the country, adults are more likely than children to have access to sanitation. However, there are no significant age differences in levels of access to adequate sanitation within the child population, or amongst older youth age groups.

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Technical notes on the data sources

General Household Survey:¹

The GHS is a multi-purpose annual survey conducted by the national statistical agency, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), to collect information on a range of topics from households in the country's nine provinces. The survey uses a sample of approximately 30,000 households. These are drawn from census enumeration areas using a two-stage stratified design with probability proportional to size sampling of primary sampling units (PSUs) and systematic sampling of dwelling units from the sampled PSUs. The resulting weighted estimates are representative of all households in South Africa.

The GHS sample consists of households and does not cover other collective institutionalised living-quarters such as boarding schools, orphanages, students' hostels, old-age homes, hospitals, prisons, military barracks and workers' hostels. These exclusions should not have a noticeable impact on the findings in respect of children.

Changes in sample frame and stratification

The sample design for the 2013 GHS was based on a master sample that was originally designed for the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) and was used for the GHS for the first time in 2008. The same master sample is shared by the GHS, the QLFS, the Living Conditions Survey and the Income and Expenditure Survey. The previous master sample for the GHS was used for the first time in 2004. This again differed from the master sample used in the first two years of the GHS: 2002 and 2003. Thus there have been three different sampling frames during the 12-year history of the annual GHS, with the changes occurring in 2004 and 2008. In addition, there have been changes in the method of stratification over the years. These changes could compromise comparability across iterations of the survey to some extent, although it is common practice to use the GHS for longitudinal monitoring and many of the official trend analyses are drawn from this survey.

Weights

Person and household weights are provided by Stats SA and are applied in Children Count analyses to give estimates at the provincial and national levels.

The GHS weights are derived from Stats SA's mid-year population estimates. The population estimates are revised retrospectively from time to time when it is possible to calibrate the population model to larger population surveys (such as the Community Survey) or to Census data. In 2013, Stats SA revised the population model to produce mid-year population estimates in light of the Census 2011 results. The new data were used to adjust the benchmarking for all previous GHS data

sets, which were re-released with the revised population weights by Stats SA.² All the Children Count indicators have been re-analysed retrospectively, using the revised weights provided by Statistics South Africa. The estimates are therefore comparable over the period 2002 to 2013. The revised weights particularly affected estimates for the years 2002 – 2007. Users may find that the baseline estimates reported here are different from those reported in previous editions of the *South African Child Gauge*.

The revised indicators for all the intervening years are available on the website: www.childrencount.ci.org.za.

Reporting error

Error may be present due to the methodology used, i.e. the questionnaire is administered to only one respondent in the household who is expected to provide information about all other members of the household. Not all respondents will have accurate information about all children in the household. In instances where the respondent did not or could not provide an answer, this was recorded as "unspecified" (no response) or "don't know" (the respondent stated that they didn't know the answer).

SOCPEN database:³

Information on social grants is derived from the Social Pensions (SOCPEN) national database maintained by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), which was established in 2004 to disburse social grants for the Department of Social Development. Prior to this, the administration of social grants and maintenance of the SOCPEN database was managed directly by the department and its provincial counterparts.

There has never been a published, systematic review of the social grants database, and the limitations in terms of validity or reliability of the data have not been quantified. However, this database is regularly used by the department and other government bodies to monitor grant take-up, and the computerised system, which records every application and grant payment, minimises the possibility of human error. Take-up data and selected reports are available from the department on request throughout the year. Children Count provides grant take-up figures as at the end of March.

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About the contributors

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Justine Burns is an associate professor in the School of Economics, and a research associate of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit. Her research interests include behavioural and experimental economics, trust and social capital, discrimination, labour markets and social networks, and intergenerational mobility. Her experimental work has focused on the effects of racial identity and income inequality on individual decision-making, as well as group cooperation in the provision of public goods. More recently, she has completed work investigating the feasibility of a youth wage subsidy as a tool to promote employment in South Africa.

Diane Cooper is a professor in the School of Public Health, University of Western Cape (UWC), and has a PhD in Public Health. Prior to her appointment at UWC she was an associate professor in the Women's Health Research Unit, School of Public Health, University of Cape Town. She has 25 years of experience in public health teaching and research, particularly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), gender and health, and women's health. Her current research interests include HIV and SRH care integration and women's and youth's SRH needs and service provision.

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Carina du Toit has been in the employment of the Centre for Child Law, University of Pretoria, since 2005. She has a BA (Law) LLB from the University of Stellenbosch and an LLM from the University of Pretoria. Carina's main duties at the centre include the management of strategic public interest litigation in the High Court, Supreme Court of Appeal and Constitutional Court. She specialises in cases arising from parental abduction, separate legal representation for children in high conflict matters, the Sexual Offences Act and media law relating to children. She lectures and supervises LLB and LLM students in child law at the University of Pretoria.

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Lauren Graham is a senior researcher at the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. She is a trained development sociologist with a PhD from the Sociology department at the University of Johannesburg and a Master of Arts (Development Sociology) from the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research interests focus on whether and how development theories translate into development outcomes for vulnerable groups, particularly young people. She has an interest in youth transitions, with a current focus on transitions to employment.

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Nwabisa Gunguluza was a researcher at the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. Her research interests include ethnographic research, youth, literacy and linguistics. She has previously worked on an ethnographic study with the Children's Institute, documenting the lives of ordinary youth in the "new" South Africa. The result of the project is a book called, *After Freedom: The rise of the post-apartheid generation in democratic South Africa*, published by Beacon Press in 2014. She continues to collaborate with the Children's Institute.

Katharine Hall is a senior researcher at the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. Her research is mainly in the areas of child poverty, inequality and social policy. She has also worked on household form, constructs of "the family", and care arrangements for children, and has a strong interest in housing policy, migration and processes of urbanisation. She coordinates "Children Count", a project which monitors the situation of children in South Africa through child-centred analysis of national household surveys. She is a standing committee member of the International Society for Child Indicators and serves on UCT's cross-faculty Poverty and Inequality Planning Group.

Kate Hampshire is a reader in anthropology at Durham University in the United Kingdom. She has a PhD in Anthropology from University College London, and has more than 20 years' research experience conducting health-related research in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Her recent research in Africa includes work on young people's health and mobile phone technology, as well as traditional healing, medicines and trust; she has also worked recently on infertility and assisted reproduction in the UK and has co-edited a volume on the globalisation of assisted reproductive technologies. Kate teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses at Durham University, specialising in the Anthropology of Global Health.

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Theresa Lorenzo is an associate professor in disability studies and occupational therapy in the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town. Her PhD in Public Health explored the participation of disabled women living in impoverished communities in social and economic development opportunities. She initiated the Disability Studies Academic Programmes to bridge the gap between activism and scholarship for disability equity. She has in-depth experience in community-based rehabilitation and developing a workforce for disability inclusion in development programmes in the under-served rural and urban communities. Current research is focused on youth, disability and higher education.

Lori Lake is commissioning editor at the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. She specialises in making complex ideas accessible to a wider audience with a particular focus on children's rights, health, protection and early childhood development. She is currently completing her Masters in Higher Education with a focus on child rights education of health professionals.

Murray Leibbrandt is the pro vice-chancellor, poverty and inequality, at the University of Cape Town, a professor in the School of Economics and the director of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit. He holds the DST/NRF National Research Chair in Poverty and Inequality Research and chairs the ASSAF Standing Committee on Science for the Reduction of Poverty and Inequality. His research analyses South African poverty, inequality and labour market dynamics using survey data and, in particular, panel data. He is one of the principal investigators on the National Income Dynamics Study.

Janet Jobson is the director of programmes at the DG Murray Trust. Janet previously headed up the Trust's work to build youth leadership for public innovation, and their work around South Africa's entrenched social dynamics. She has a particular interest in supporting young people to innovate for the public good, and build powerful networks to effect change in their communities, and at national and global levels. She has an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Oxford, and was a Jeanne Sauve Public Leadership Fellow in 2009/10.

Tawanda Makusha is a senior research specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council. He holds a PhD in Gender Education and an MA in Development Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. His doctoral studies focused on the determinants of father involvement in KwaZulu-Natal, drawing on the reports of men, women and children. His areas of research interest are in parenting, families and fathers; the impact of poverty and HIV and AIDS on children and families. Tawanda has co-published peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters on child well-being, fatherhood, men and masculinities in South Africa.

Monde Makiwane is a chief research specialist in the Human and Social Development Research Programme of the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria, and a commissioner of the Global Commission on Aging in developing countries. He holds a Masters in Social Science (Sociology) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and a PhD in Demography from the University of the Witwatersrand. His areas of research interest include: intergenerational relations, youth, social security and migration.

Buti Kgwaridi Manamela is the Deputy Minister in the Presidency responsible for Planning Monitoring and Evaluation as well as Youth Development and Administration. He is a member of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, and also a member of the Provincial Executive Committee and Provincial Working Committee of the African National Congress in the Limpopo province. Deputy Minister Manamela has successfully seen through the signing of the National Youth Policy 2020. As the political authority for the National Youth Development Agency he is working on the amendment of the NYDA Act. He also chairs the Presidential Working Group on Youth, the Deputy Ministers' Task Team and the Task Team on Creative and Cultural Industries. The Deputy Minister has been a Member of Parliament since 2009.

Cecil Mlatsheni is a senior lecturer in the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town, and has a PhD in Economics. He is a principal investigator on the National Income Dynamics Study and a research associate of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit. His research interests lie in labour market participation and employment, with a specific focus on youth unemployment and the transition from schooling to work.

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Seamus Needham is the research and planning manager of the Further Education and Training Institute at the University of the Western Cape. He holds an M.Ed. and is a PhD candidate. Seamus has been involved in adult education for over 20 years in roles of materials development, delivery of access programmes, fund-raising, strategic planning and research. His current research interests include articulation between vocational and academic sectors, post-schooling and identity formation of FET college lecturers. He has served as a member of the Ministerial Committee for Articulation Policy and the Human Resource Development Council Technical Task Team for FET Colleges.

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Gina Porter has led a series of mobility-related research projects in sub-Saharan Africa over the last 30 years and published widely in this field. Uneven power relationships and associated issues of exclusion are linking themes through her work, much of which has a strong gender component. Associated with this is a focus on developing innovative methodologies for effective field research. She currently leads a United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council/Department of International Development-funded study of young people and mobile phones. She is a professor in the Anthropology Department, Durham University, UK.

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Winnie Sambu is a researcher at the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. She holds an MA in Development Management at Ruhr-Universität Bochum and a Masters degree in Economics (Development Studies) from the University of the Western Cape. Her focus at the Institute has been on quantitative research surrounding socio-economic issues such as poverty and inequality, food and nutrition security, and household living conditions.

Charmaine Smith is the communication and knowledge manager of the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. A journalist in background, she has been applying her media and communication skills in the development sector for the past 14 years. She is mainly responsible for the communication and marketing of the Institute and its work and publications, and has been privileged to serve on all the editorial teams of the *South African Child Gauge* since its start-up in 2005. She is completing a Masters in Arts (Journalism) degree in 2015.

Crain Soudien is the chief executive officer of the Human Sciences Research Council, and a former deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town. He is a professor and widely published sociologist and educationalist with a PhD from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is involved in a number of local, national and international social and cultural organisations and is the former chairperson of the District Six Museum Foundation, a former president of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies and was, in 2008 – 2009, the chair of a Ministerial Committee on Transformation in Higher Education. He is a fellow of a number of local and international universities and academies.

Nic Spaull is a postdoctoral fellow at Stellenbosch University, a visiting scholar at Stanford University and holds a PhD in Economics. His research focuses on education policy in South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa with special emphases on numeracy and literacy as well as equity in educational outcomes. He has been involved in a number of local and international research projects on education in South Africa and Africa for organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, the Presidency of South Africa, the European Union, and the national Department of Basic Education. He also sits on the joint advisory committee of the South African Human Rights Commission.

Sharlene Swartz is a research director at the Human Sciences Research Council, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Cape Town, and a visiting fellow at Harvard University and the University of Cambridge. Her expertise centres on youth development in adversity, and on restitution and redress. She is the author of: *Ikasi: The Moral Ecology of South Africa's Township Youth* (2009); *Teenage Tata: Voices of Young Fathers in South Africa* (2009); *Youth Citizenship and the Politics of Belonging* (2013) and, forthcoming in 2016, *Making Good: Social Restitution in South Africa*.

Catherine Ward is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town. She has a PhD in clinical-community psychology and is interested in violence prevention from the perspective of children's development, and particularly in public health approaches to this – in developing evidence-based approaches to violence prevention that have a wide reach and are effective in improving children's development and reducing their likelihood of becoming aggressive.

Buhle Zuma lectures in the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town. His current research, reading, thinking and writing is broadly located with Afro-Caribbean social, political and psychology thought. His developing intellectual project can be labelled as "psycho-political thought on Black existence". He sees his work as interdisciplinary as the movement of his thought transgresses various disciplinary boundaries such as sociology, philosophical anthropology, political and economic history, literature and poetry, creative arts, post-colonial psychology, Africana philosophy and cultural studies. Lastly, Dr Zuma is the founder and chairman of the Research Institute for the Study of the Human that he is currently establishing.

About the *South African Child Gauge*

The *South African Child Gauge* is an annual publication of the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town that monitors progress in the realisation of children's rights. Key features include a series of essays to inform national dialogue on a particular area which impacts on South Africa's children; a summary of new legislative and policy developments affecting children; and quantitative data which track demographic and socio-economic statistics on children.



Previous issues of the *South African Child Gauge*:

- 2014: Preventing violence against children
- 2013: Essential services for young children
- 2012: Children and inequality: Closing the gap
- 2010/2011: Children as citizens: Participating in social dialogue
- 2009/2010: Healthy children: From survival to optimal development
- 2008/2009: Meaningful access to basic education
- 2007/2008: Children's constitutional right to social services
- 2006: Children and poverty
- 2005: Children and HIV/AIDS

All issues of the *South African Child Gauge* are available for download at www.ci.org.za

The Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, has been publishing the *South African Child Gauge*® every year since 2005 to track progress towards the realisation of children's rights.

The *South African Child Gauge 2015* is the tenth issue, and focuses on the theme of youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty. This issue also discusses recent policy and legislative developments that affect children and youth in South Africa, and provides child- and youth-centred data to monitor progress and track the realisation of their socio-economic rights in the country.

The Children's Institute aims to contribute to policies, laws and interventions that promote equality and improve the conditions of all children in South Africa, through research, advocacy, education and technical support.

"I welcome the *Child Gauge 2015*. The research presented will help us to better understand the situation of youth in present day South Africa so that our policies and programmes can be relevant to their needs and aspirations."

Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister in The Presidency: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation as well as Youth Development and Administration

"The annual *South African Child Gauge* is without question the pre-eminent national publication on the subject of children, and society owes a debt of gratitude to the Children's Institute for this evidence-led investment in the future. I urge government, civil society actors, the donor community as well as the media to act on the critical information in the *South African Child Gauge 2015* especially with regards to the interventions described and outcomes anticipated that could still change the fate of millions of poor children and their families."

Prof. Jonathan Jansen, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, University of the Free State

"The *South African Child Gauge* can help us to advance an agenda to make citizenship and rights a reality for children, and achieve Vision 2030."

Vivienne Taylor, Head of the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town, and Commissioner on the National Planning Commission, 2013

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