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# **A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF YOUTH IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

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# Chapter 1: RATIONALE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 1.1 Introduction

Based on a request by the Office of the MEC in the Western Cape Department of Social Development, a situational analysis of young people in six research sites within the Western Cape was conducted. This research was led in support of the Western Cape Youth Development Strategy (WCYDS). The main focus of the project was on young people, essentially youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEETS). In broad strokes, the research focused on the daily experiences and challenges of these youth. It is however of great importance to mention that the concept of NEETS was initially employed as a point of departure and utilized as an analytical tool to identify and interact with youth. The main focus of this study was therefore to explore the lives of such youth aged 15 – 34 years in the context of the Western Cape amidst its social, economic and political challenges.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Research

On 8 April 2014, the Department of Social Development officially launched the Western Cape Youth Development Strategy (WCYDS). The strategy “articulates how the Western Cape Government can, using a whole-of-society approach, in partnerships with non-governmental and private sector role players, faith based organisations and the youth of the province, create an enabling environment for all young people to thrive in the Western Cape” (WCYDS: 2013: 9). In order to achieve this goal, certain priority areas are identified in the YDS to build individual capabilities and address the impact of poverty. These include: education, joblessness (NEETS), trauma and families, gangs and disconnected youth (YDS: 2013: 27). Therefore, the purpose of this research project was to gain an improved understanding of youth, their contexts and everyday lives.

Despite the frequent representation of African children and youth as increasingly being identified as ‘social problems’ within academic discourse and policy (Bordonaro and Payne: 2012; Seekings: 2006), this study approached youth as active agents who navigate and impress upon their environments. Therefore, this research project attempted to explore and describe the social positions of these youth as well as their perceptions and functioning in their everyday lives.

This information allows the Youth Development Programme and the guardians of the Youth Development Strategy to explore their approach towards youth, how to prevent youth becoming or staying NEET's and to explore intervention strategies to promote positive youth development.

### 1.3 Aim and Objectives

The overarching aim of the project was to understand youths' knowledge, attitudes and perceptions (KAP) about their social, economic and political contexts in the Western Cape. The research furthermore attempted to understand how young people interact and navigate within their social and physical spaces.

The project had the following objectives:

1. To develop a profile of youth in the Western Cape.
2. To describe how youth construct and navigate their everyday lives and experiences.
3. To investigate the protective and risk factors of youth.
4. To explore youth perceptions of themselves and their environments.

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, the following two theoretical concepts were identified in an attempt to contextualise and understand the interdependent relationship between youth and the specific social contexts and positions that they navigate within.

#### 1.4.1 Structural Violence

Habitual interpretations of violence are embedded within that which causes direct, physical or psychological harm. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation<sup>1</sup>." Galtung (1996) however explains that people are also killed, deprived (maldeveloped) and psychologically harmed through violent socioeconomic or political structures. This form of violence is defined as structural violence. Simply put, Galtung (1996) refers to structural violence as the political and socio-economic processes that impinge on basic human needs.

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<sup>1</sup> World report on violence and health: summary. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.

Anthropologist, Paul Farmer's (2004) definition states that "structural violence is one way of describing social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way... The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world; they are violent because they cause injury to people ... neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces conspire to constrain individual agency. Structural violence is visited upon all those whose social status denies them access to the fruits of scientific and social progress." Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2004: 14) contributes to the definition in suggesting that "structural violence erases the history and consciousness of the social origins of poverty, sickness, hunger, and premature death, so that they are simply taken for granted and naturalised so that no one is held accountable except, perhaps, the poor themselves." The goal of those who use the concept of structural violence is to highlight 'the history and social consciousness' of poverty, premature death and disability and to locate the causes of this type of violence.

The concept of structural violence can be utilized within this study in an attempt to highlight the socio-economic and historical framework in which to situate the actions and understandings of the youth participants. In addition, the concept can be employed to increase the social consciousness of poverty; and to describe how the socio-economic-historical framework influences the social positions of young people, two decades into the post-Apartheid era.

#### **1.4.2 Agency**

In Giddens' *Structuration Theory* (1984), he states that social life extends beyond random individual acts and is not merely influenced by social forces either. According to Giddens, structure does not exist independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activity. In his view, human agency and social structure are related. He continues to state that social structures only exist through individual actions. The theory of structuration endeavours to merge theoretical dichotomies, social structure and agency, and proposes that structure and agency be engaged with as related concepts. Social structures provide the means through which people act, but the form these structures take is a result of their actions (James and James: 2008). Giddens states that individuals have the power to transform social structures and institutions through their actions. He proposes that human action is enacted within pre-existing social structures, regulated by norms and distinct from that of other structures. However, these structures and rules are impermanent as they can be reproduced and modified by human action.

What Giddens refers to as agency is human action. He considers agency to be the capability of doing something and not the intention of doing something (Giddens: 1984; Honwana and De Boeck: 2005). "Agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently. Whatever happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened" (Giddens: 1984: 9). Giddens continues, the agent is a human being with transformative capacity – with the power to intervene or to refrain from intervention (Honwana and De Boeck: 2005: 48). He then elaborates that agents strategically use specific structural properties to fulfil their needs and how they are aware how certain structural properties limit their lives, and they can act out to change these structural properties.

Defining the concept of agency has presented numerous challenges. Ortner's *Anthropology and Social Theory* defined the difficulties of defining agency as follows: firstly, whether agency inherently involves 'intention' (Giddens: 1984; Sewell: 1992; Taylor: 1985). Secondly, the universality and cultural constructedness of agency and finally, the relationship between agency and power. Due to the scope of the current research, these complexities could not be explored. Rather the concept of agency will be used to show *how* agency is enacted in various ways for youth in their daily activities. Therefore, the concept will mainly be used to explore how young people are acting creatively within the different (depriving) contexts that they find themselves in.

By presenting the concept of structuration theory, this report attempts to highlight the interactive relationship between structure and agency. The concept of agency is relevant to this research as it attempts to explore how young people navigate and negotiate their everyday interactions as well as the creative forms of action that they take under specific circumstances.

## 1.5 Research Questions

The following detailed research questions originated from the broader research aims and objectives mentioned earlier.

- 1.5.1 How do the youth perceive themselves, their norms and circumstances?
  - I. How do the youth perceive themselves?
  - II. How do they understand their social positions?
  - III. How do they perceive their surroundings? Family, peers, communities, etc.
  - IV. What are positives for them within their contexts?

- V. Why do they consider these as positive?
- VI. How do they define success?
- VII. What are the challenges that they experience?
- VIII. How do they think these challenges can be overcome?
- IX. What are their future aspirations?
- X. How do they plan to achieve these goals?

1.5.2 How do youth respond to their social positions and situations?

- I. How are youth's daily lives enacted?
- II. How do youth perceive others around them? For example, peers, families and communities.
- III. How do youth express their different forms of agency?
- IV. How do youth react to the various issues that they encounter/experience (such as unemployment, lack of education, crime, poverty) on a day-to-day basis?
- V. What is the youth's understanding of the physical, social and economic resources available to them?
- VI. Does the youth utilize the available resources to them?
- VII. If so, how do they make use of these different resources?

1.5.3 What social services and support structures are available for the youth?

- I. Which services and support structures are available for the youth in their communities and outside?
- II. What support structures are youth aware of?
- III. What is the relationship between the youth and the available support structures?
- IV. To what extent do these support structures play a role in the lives of the youth?
- V. What support structures were successful and why?
- VI. What support structures has been less successful and why?
- VII. What are the challenges with regards to the support structures?
- VIII. How can these challenges be addressed?
- IX. What support structures are absent but required?
- X. How can youth be assisted to improve their lives?

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Defining Youth

The concept of *youth* is a relatively recent development (Carstens: 2013). Generational categories such as youth, childhood and adulthood, are not natural and impartial. Instead, such categories are part of a struggle for influence and authority within society (Christiansen: 2006). Similar to the discourse on childhood that has been constructed after the sixteenth century, youth only became a cultural and social construct after World War II (Carstens: 2013; Aries: 1962; Goldson *et al*: 2003: 11). According to McCulloch (2006: 540), youth were categorised within three paradigms: a biological grouping, an idiosyncratic social class and a cultural construct. Understanding youth as multidimensional indicated a significant shift from the historically rigid definition of youth. Therefore, the concept of youth has moved beyond simply being defined as a biological phase. Instead, the concept is now treated as a “variable concept that has been socially constructed and reconstructed” (Stephenson: 2007: 19). Christiansen (2006) states that the concept of youth as it unfolds in relation to social dynamics can be understood only when the emphasis is shifted away from biological and chronological definitions .

Christiansen *et al* (2006: 10) states that “youth is differently constituted and configured in different times and places. It may be an influential social category in one context, a marginal one in another and obsolete in a third”. Christiansen *et al* continues to suggest that the concept of youth's existence and meaning should not be taken for granted and that the concept is dynamic and contested. Christiansen (2006) continues to state that such generational categories are given their meanings and manifestations in relation to specific social processes, cultural understandings and historical influences. Consequently, youth can be configured differently in diverse settings such as a social category in one context, marginalised in another while obsolete in another context. Seekings' (1993) article entitled *Heroes or Villains* nicely presents the transition that South African youth experienced from being perceived as heroes during the political struggles to villains during the post-Apartheid era.

Vigh (2006) highlights the importance of understanding youth as both social being and social becoming. He states that youth should be understood as a position in movement. This theoretical shift has resulted in more nuanced understandings of youth such as the work of Honwana and De Boeck's *Makers and Breakers* (2005) and Durham's *social shifters* (2000). The notions of being and becoming recognises that one's position is not fixed but rather in a process of flux and therefore the need to explore the different pathways in which young people position

themselves and are positioned within different social contexts. Therefore, Christiansen *et al* (2006) advocates a “perspectival dualist analysis” of youth. This approach suggests an analysis which interlinks the social and experiential aspects of youth and that highlights the meaning that youth create as well as positioning them within the social landscape they seek to navigate in.

## **2.2. Western Cape Youth Development Strategy (WCYDS)**

In 2013, the Western Cape Provincial Government launched their Youth Development Strategy (YDS). The purpose of the YDS is to “create more support, opportunities and services for all young people to better engage with their environment (external and internal) and successful transition into responsible, independent, productive, healthy and stable adults” (Western Cape Youth Development Strategy: 2013). The YDS mainly focuses on young people between the ages of 15 – 24 and the pre-youth phase that includes young people between 10-14 years old.

The strategy highlights the importance of the 10--24 year age group in human development. This period is crucial as young people are exploring ways to meet their overall needs and attempting to build their capabilities and connections that they understand to be essential for their development. According to the YDS (2013: 11), “there is little systematic, coherent and reliable support for youth”. Consequently many youth navigate through these processes without the required services, support and opportunities to guide their development. In view of this, youth adopt alternative, risky and ‘unhealthy’ ways to meet their needs such as crime, affiliation to youth gangs and drug addiction. Therefore, a strategy is needed to be implemented in conjunction with an early childhood development strategy that focuses on the physical, emotional, educational and social development of youth.

The YDS adopts a ‘whole of society’ approach. This means that achieving the aims of the YDS is not solely the responsibility of the Western Cape Government. Instead, participation from various stakeholders, in the spheres of government and non-government, is required. The strategy is based on five pillars: strengthening family foundations, improving education and training, increasing access to economic opportunities, providing youth with positive identity and a sense of belonging and finally, facilitating reconnection opportunities to youth who may have experienced social exclusion.

Overall, the YDS provides a blueprint for how the Western Cape Government can, with the support of various stakeholders, create an environment that is conducive for the development

of youth. The YDS intends to provide a basis for employing the collective resources of the society towards a synchronized, effective environment for youth development. More specifically, the goal of the strategy is to ensure that by the age of 25, youth who reside in the Western Cape, are productive citizens with positive personal, family and social relations.

### **2.3. Current situation of Youth in the Western Cape**

Despite the promises of a 'New South Africa', over twenty years later, inequality throughout South Africa, including the Western Cape persists (Swartz, Harding and De Lannoy: 2012). Youth are confronted with various challenges that will be highlighted below:

The YDS (2013: 20) mentions that it pays particular attention to notions of intergenerational poverty – “a situation where succeeding generations in families and communities become trapped in conditions of poverty from which they seemingly cannot escape”. For instance, the YDS states that under a million children in the Western Cape are recipients of Child Support, foster care and care dependency grants. The Child Gauge (2013) states that 16% of families in the Western Cape experience hunger regularly while approximately 15% of youth under the age of 18 years live in households with no working adults. Socio-economic deprivation of this nature has a devastating impact on the learning abilities, health, and overall well-being of youth

In the Western Cape, youth are constantly confronted with issues of safety and violence. According to the 2012 National School Violence Survey the Western Cape had the second highest rate of learners who reported victimisation (28.7%). In a survey of the prevalence of substance abuse at schools (Medical Research Council, 2013) 66% of learners reported lifetime use of alcohol, while almost a quarter of learners have used cannabis. It was clear that males were at higher risk of lifetime use of the hard drugs.

The MRC report (2013) indicated that 41.1% of learners were considered being at 'medium risk' and 14.9% 'high risk' for mental health problems. The Western Cape experiences high incidence of mental health illness with 15% of young people suffering from mental health problems and 44% at risk of mental health problems (UNODC, 2012).

Young people in the Western Cape are exposed to very high levels of violence and criminality. In particular, youth experience high levels of family criminality with over a quarter having a parent and/or sibling who has already been imprisoned and just under a quarter of family

members having used drugs (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). There appears to be a strong correlation in the Western Cape between drugs, violence and gangs. Burton and Leoschut (2013) further reported that gangsterism is endemic in the Western Cape and increasingly affects young people, particularly learners at school. Younger members are often used to carry out activities on behalf of the gang. The MRC report (2013) that 11.8% of learners reported having being affiliated to a gang in the twelve months preceding the study.

## Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research project used a mixed methodology design. The research was grounded within a descriptive and explanatory framework. It included both qualitative and quantitative methods.

### 3.1. Quantitative and Quantitative Methods

The quantitative part of the research entailed secondary data analysis, specifically of Census 2011 in order to compile a socio-demographic profile of youth in the Western Cape.

The qualitative section of the research focused on a description of the everyday experiences, perceptions and actions of youth within the Western Cape. Methods used included interviews and focus groups with youth and professionals in the field of youth development. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from youth participants through the completion of a self-administered socio-demographic questionnaire.

### 3.2. Sampling

#### 3.2.1. Selection of Research Sites

The six research sites that were selected for participation were selected following the analysis of the educational and employment status of youth from Census 2011 data. Techniques used for this analysis are described in more detail in Chapter 2. A purposive sampling approach was used to ensure that a variety of areas are included to allow for differing youth perspectives due to location. The geographical areas that were selected contained high frequencies of NEETS in concentrated physical settings. These sampling criteria resulted in the following six areas being selected:

1. Delft
2. Philippi
3. Mitchell's Plain
4. Paarl
5. Saldanha
6. De Doorns

#### 3.2.2. Sampling of Participants

Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used for the recruitment of participants. Convenience sampling refers to drawing on participants that are both easily accessible and

willing to participate in the study (Teddlie and Yu: 2007). Snow ball sampling however refers to a method used when research participants are asked to make referrals to other potential participants (Davis *et al*: 2010).

Participants were recruited for the study via the youth co-ordinators of the Department's Regional and Local Offices in the identified sites. Youth co-ordinators were requested to recruit youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years to participate in focus group discussions and individual interviews. Professional staff, such as social workers, community workers and youth co-ordinators were recruited to participate as well. The initial objective was to undertake 6 interviews with professionals; 2 focus groups with youth and 5 individual interviews with youth in the selected sites.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

A socio-demographic questionnaire consisting of both closed and open ended questions was designed for participants to complete (under the supervision of the researchers). This questionnaire was available in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. Participants were asked to indicate their preferred languages during the fieldwork (See Annexure 1).

The qualitative research instruments included semi-structured interview schedules (see Annexure 2 and Annexure 3). These schedules were designed for individual interviews with youth participants and key informant interviews with professionals. In addition, a focus group schedule was designed to steer the group discussions with youth participants.

Individual interviews and focus group discussions were recorded electronically. Participants were however first requested to consent to the recording of the interviews. Whilst administering the interviews, the research interns took notes during the research activities and field notes were compiled at the end of each day. Overall, 16 youth and 7 professional individual interviews were conducted; and a total of 22 focus group discussions were conducted in the six research sites. 153 socio-demographic questionnaires were completed by participants.

In order to compile the demographic profile of youth in the Western Cape, data from Census 2011 was extracted via the SuperCross programme obtained from Statistics South Africa.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

Quantitative data from the socio-demographic questionnaires completed by the youth participants was captured and analysed in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Qualitative data was transcribed by the researcher and two research interns from the dictaphones. Transcriptions were however not transcribed verbatim. Different levels of data analysis followed thereafter. The first level of analysis entailed a rough coding of the data; while the second level of analysis embraced a more refined analysis approach. During this phase, the data was coded into the main themes that emerged from the data and further thematic analysis took place.

Census 2011 data was categorised according to key demographic variables and analysed in Excel.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval for the research project was obtained from the Department's Research Ethics Committee. Approval was obtained for participants above the age of 15 years to provide independent consent to participate, when adult/guardian consent could not be obtained.

The research adhered to the Departments Guidelines for Ethical Research. An informed consent form was handed to each individual who participated in the study. Each participant was aware of the nature and context of the study and that their participation was voluntarily. The participants were informed about their right to terminate their participation and to withdraw any time if they felt uncomfortable. However, none of the participants prematurely terminated their participation in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were maintained in order to protect participant identities. Participants provided their consent for the interviews and focus group discussions to be recorded on the dictaphones.

### **3.6. Limitations**

This project has several limitations, mainly relating to sites and participants not being representative of all youth in the Western Cape. Research findings can therefore not be generalised to youth in the province.

During the fieldwork phase of the project, challenges were experienced in respect of the age of some of the participants. Participants who were not between the ages of 15 – 35 years old were included in the focus group discussion as they escorted invited participants to these activities.

The number of participants in the research sites varied. In some instances, more participants attended focus groups than was required while in other sites, difficulties were experienced in recruiting the required number of youth to attend research activities. In sites where the number of participants was higher than expected, challenges were experienced with the completion of the socio-demographic questionnaire, resulting in some participants not completing the questionnaire.

Not all youth who participated in research activities in the six sites, completed the questionnaire, mainly due to logistical constraints encountered during the fieldwork process. The majority of participants, who completed the questionnaire, were from non-Metro areas. No questionnaires were completed in Phillippi. Focus group attendance appeared to have been dominated by male youth and in minor instances, participation by youth outside the required age criteria.

## Chapter 4: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF YOUTH IN THE WESTERN CAPE

### 4.1. Demographic Overview of Youth in the Western Cape

According to the 2011 Census, the Western Cape has a population of 2 137 821 youth between the age of 15 and 34 years. The majority of youth (66.2%) reside in the Cape Metro, followed by the Cape Winelands (13.5%) and Eden (8.8%). The number of youth in the province increased from 1 695 685 to 2 137 821 between Census 2001 and Census 2011. Between the two Censuses, the proportion of youth in both the West Coast District and the Cape Town Metro increased while decreasing in all other Districts as displayed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Distribution (%) of the (15-34) youth population by District Municipality**

District Municipality	2001	2011
Cape Town Metro	65.6%	66.2%
Cape Winelands	13.9%	13.5%
Eden	9.2%	8.8%
West Coast	5.9%	6.4%
Overberg	4.2%	4.1%
Central Karoo	1.1%	1.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

In terms of the distribution of youth according to population group, the majority of youth in the Western Cape are Coloured (45.9%) followed by Black Africans (41.7%), Whites (11.4%), and Indian/Asian (1.1%). Between the two Censuses, the proportion of Black African youth in the province increased from 33.2% (2001) to 41.7% (2011) due to in-migration. Over the same period, the proportion of Coloured youth decreased from 51.43% (2001) to 45.9% (2011) and the proportion of White youth from 14.4% (2001) to 11.4% (2011). In terms of migration trends in the province, Census 2011 indicates that 20,4% of the province's youth were born in the Eastern Cape and 5,4% outside South Africa.

The largest proportion of youth in the Western Cape is in the age category of 25 to 29 years (27, 7%) followed by 27, 3% who are in the age category of 20 to 24 years. Table 2 below displays the distribution of the youth population according to four distinct age categories between the two Census periods of 2001 and 2011.

**Table 2: Age Categories of Youth in the Western Cape Province**

<b>Age Category</b>	<b>2001</b>		<b>2011</b>	
15-19	446 195	26.3	480 122	22.5
20-24	430 907	25.4	583 551	27.3
25-29	425 791	25.1	592 548	27.7
30-34	392 792	23.2	481 600	22.5
Total	1 695 685	100.0	2 137 821	100.0

Census 2011 furthermore indicates that the proportion of male youth (50.2%) in the province is higher than the proportion of female youth (48.9%) in the province. In terms of the marital status of youth, an analysis of Census 2001 and Census 2011 indicates an increase in the percentage of youths living as *Partners* (7.3% in 2001 compared to 9.5% in 2011) and a decrease in youth who are married (22.4% in 2001 to 20.74% in 2011).

## **4.2. Youth Enrolment in Education**

Trends in respect of school attendance in the Western Cape indicate that the percentage of youth in the province who are not attending school increased from 8, 2% at the age of 15, to 13, 7% at the age of 16 years. School dropout clearly is a concern in the province. As indicated in Table 3 below, the West Coast (22, 9%) has the highest percentage of youth not attending school by the age of 16 years, followed by the Karoo (7,4%). In terms of population group, the highest percentage of youth who are not attending school by the age of 16 years are Coloured (16, 9%), followed by Black/African youth (11, 2%).

**Table 3: Youth age 16 not attending school by District Municipality**

District Municipality	% Youth aged 16 Years not attending school
West Coast	22,9%
Karoo	7,4%
Overberg	18,5%
Eden	16,4%
Winelands	15,6%
Cape Town	11,3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,2%</b>

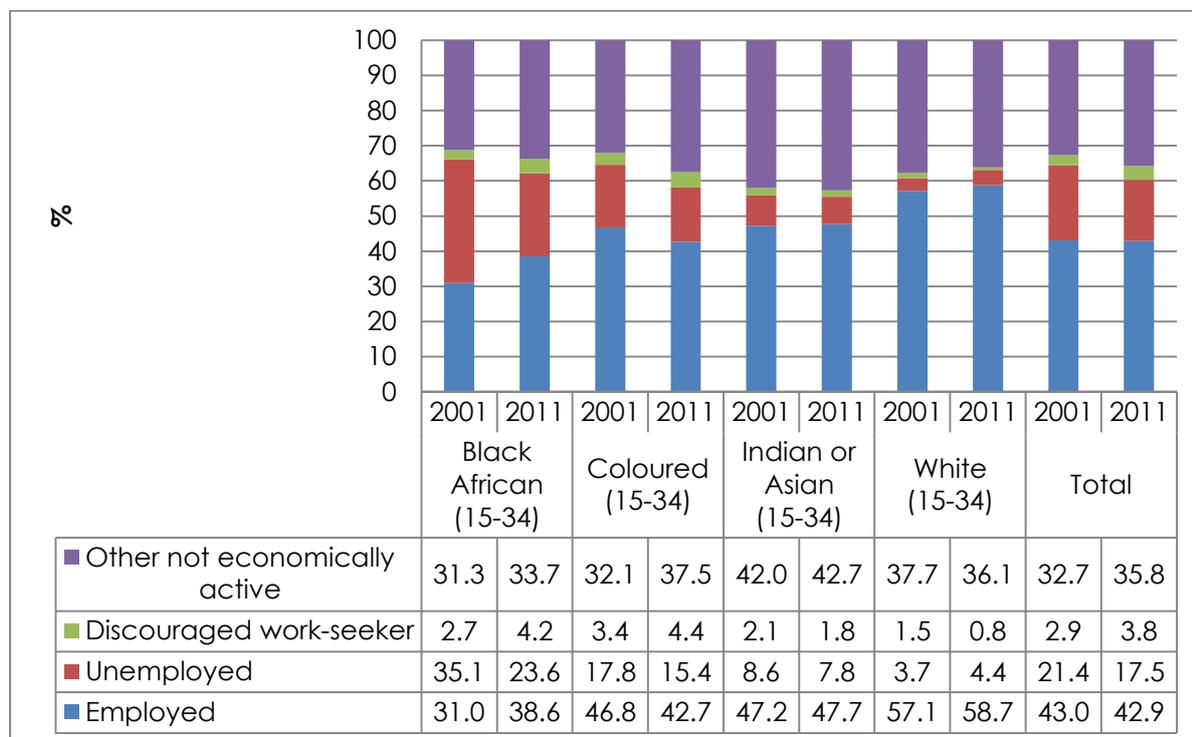
An analysis of Census data in respect of the highest educational levels achieved by youth in the Western Cape indicates the following. In the age category of 25 to 34 years:

- 77,4% of youth have completed between Grade 8 and Grade 11;
- 66,7% of youth have completed Grade 12; and
- 15,1% have achieved a Bachelors or Master's degree or a PhD.

### **4.3. Employment status of youth in the Western Cape**

Census 2011 indicates that the number of youth in the age category of 15 to 34 years who are employed in the province decreased from 43% in 2001 to 42,9% in 2011. Over the same period, the number of youth who are unemployed in this age category decreased from 21,4% to 17,5%. However, it should be noted that while youth unemployment appeared to decrease, the number of youth in the *Other not economically active* or *Discouraged work seeker* categories as illustrated in Figure 1 below, increased. Specifically, the percentage of youths in the *Other not economically active* category increased by 3.1 percentage points whilst those in the *Discouraged work seeker* category increased by 0.9 percentage points for both males and females. The increase in the percentage of youth in the 'other not economically active' category is an indication of youth who are in training.

**Figure 1: Employment status of youth by population group**



In terms of participation per employment sector, Census 2011 indicates that the majority of employed youth (78.7%) work in the formal sector followed by 11,5% working in the informal sector and 7,3% who are employed at private households.

#### 4.4. NEETS in the Western Cape

As highlighted in the preceding sections, many youth in the Western Cape struggle to achieve a successful transition from adolescence to young adulthood. For example, many youth drop out of school, are not enrolled in training and do not have employment. The economic and social consequences of this transitional breakdown manifest in many of the social pathologies present in the province. In order to promote a successful transition between adolescence and young adulthood, research is required in order to identify factors contributing to youth experiencing transitional challenges as well as factors that contribute to the successful transition of other youth in the province.

In the 1980's, the United Kingdom was grappling with the same phenomenon and formulated the term NEET as an indicator to describe young people who are **n**ot in **e**mployment, **e**ducation or **t**raining. In 1999, the term was formally introduced at a political level in the government of the

United Kingdom's *Bridging the gap* report (Eurofound, 2012). As indicated in the report compiled by Eurofound, the term has subsequently spread throughout the world and been adopted by many countries as an indicator for vulnerable youth. No internationally recognised definition exists however, with each country adopting its own definition. For the purposes of this research report, NEET is defined as youth aged 15 to 34 who are not educated, not in training and not employed. The concepts not educated, in training and employed were operationalised by using Census 2011 variables and data. 'Not educated' was operationalised as being all persons aged 15 to 34 with less than a grade 12 qualification. 'Not in training' was operationalized as all persons aged 15 to 34 not enrolled in school or any other educational institution. 'Not employed' was operationalized as all persons aged 15 to 34 who are either unemployed or discouraged work seekers. Someone who fits all three categories is considered to be a NEET. A person, who fits into one or two of the categories, but not all three, is not considered to be a NEET.

The concept of NEETs is subject to different interpretations. In the Eurofound report emphasis was placed on this group of youth having a set of common characteristics specifically that of not accumulating human capital that places those (NEETs) at risk of future poor employment outcomes and of social exclusion. In this report the concept NEETs is used as a measure of the socio-economic vulnerability of young people in the Western Cape, specifically in terms of the dimensions of education, training and employment. The operationalization of the concept has assisted in determining the extent and location of NEETs in the province.

The Census 2011 Community Profile Database for Education at Sub-Place level was used to derive the number of NEETs per sub-place in the Province. Table 2 below shows the top 15 Census 2011 sub-places with the number of youth classified as NEET (Department of Social Development, 2013.)

**Table 4: NEETS- Top 15 Census 2011 Place Names**

<b>Census Sub-Place (Suburb)</b>		<b>Total NEETS</b>
1	Delft Sub Place	7646
2	Browns Farms	6738
3	Tafelsig	5686
4	Ikwezi Park	5356
5	Mfuleni	4707
6	Langa	4520
7	Manenberg	4455
8	Nomzamo SP	4002
9	Philippi East	3879
10	Khayelitsha Village V3 North	3690
11	Dunoon	3589
12	Thembaletu George	3567
13	Delft South	3147
14	Gugulethu Sub Place	3146
15	Hanover Park	2886

Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011

Table 3 shows the top 7 Local Municipalities with the number of youth classified as NEET.

**Table 5: NEETS- Top 7 Local Municipality**

	<b>Local Municipality</b>	<b>Total NEETS</b>
1	Drakenstein	9337
2	George	8522
3	Saldanha	5813
4	Stellenbosch	5614
5	Overstrand	4676
6	Oudtshoorn	4626
7	Breede Valley	4550

## 4.5. Demographic Profile of Youth Participants in the six Research Sites

Baseline socio-demographic information was collected from 153 youth participants in the six identified research sites that have a high incidence of NEETS through the completion of a structured questionnaire (see Annexure 1). An analysis of questionnaire data highlighted the following key demographic characteristics of participants:

- The majority of participants, who completed the questionnaire, were from non-Metro areas as displayed in Table 4 below. Due to challenges encountered during the fieldwork phase of the project, no questionnaires were completed in Phillipi. Not all youth who participated in research activities in the six sites, completed the questionnaire, mainly due to logistical constraints encountered during the fieldwork process.

Table 6: Residential Area of Participant

<b>Residential Area of Participant</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Delft	21	13.7
Mitchells Plain	24	15.7
Paarl	30	19.6
De Doorns	36	23.5
Saldanha	42	27.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

- In terms of the age category of participants, the majority of participants who completed questionnaires (78%) were between the age of 16 and 26 years. Seven participants, who completed the questionnaire, were outside the sampling age range of 15 to 34 years. Of these 7 participants, 3 were younger than 15; and 4 were older than 34 years.
- 62,1% of participants were male and 37,9% female.
- 71,2% of participants were Coloured, followed by 23% who were Black.
- 69.9% of participants identified Afrikaans as the language spoken most often in their households, followed by Xhosa (17%) and English (7,2%).
- In terms of marital status, the majority (93,5%) of participants indicated that they have never been married. Only 3,3% of participants were married while 1,3% were living together.

Data obtained from participants highlighted the following in respect of their household circumstances:

- 80% of participants were living in a dwelling made by concrete or brick.
- 22 % of participants were living in households that have 4 rooms, followed by 18,3% of participants who lived in dwellings with 5 rooms. A minority (5%) of participants lived in dwellings with only 1 room.
- The majority of participants were living in households that had access to basic amenities. For example, 93,5% had electricity at home compared to 6% that did not. 88% had a toilet inside the house or yard, followed by 7,2% who had access to a communal toilet and 4,6% that did not have access to toilet facilities. 85,6% of households had piped water inside house/yard.
- In terms of household size, 19,6% lived in a households of 4 members, followed by 14,5% of participants who resided in a household of 3 members.16% of participants were living in households with 5 members.
- 13, 5% of participants indicated that they were not involved in household decisions, while the majority (35,9%) indicated involvement in 'some decisions'.

Regarding the educational status of participants, the analysis of questionnaire data indicated that:

- 43,8% of participants were attending an educational institution (school, college or ABET) at the time of the research.
- 30,1% were attending ordinary school (grade 1 to 12); 2,6% were in a special school and 7,2% in FET college.
- 56,2% were NOT attending any educational institution.
- 20,9% of participants completed grade 12, followed by 17% who completed grade 8. Only 11% had completed grade 12 and obtained a certificate or diploma.

In terms of the employment status of participants, the following was established:

- 32% of participants did work for payment in seven days preceding the research compared to 64%) who did not.

- The majority of youth (14,3%) who did paid work during the 7 days prior to the completion of the questionnaire, were 17 years old, followed by 12,2% who were 18 years old. The number of youth who did paid work appeared to be declining among older youth.
- In terms of looking for work, 34% of participants indicated that they were looking for work in the 4 weeks prior to the research compared to 28% who did not.

## Chapter 5: Young People's Challenges at School

On a daily basis, young people devote a significant amount of their time at school. Schools are mainly regarded as places of academic development. However, schools similarly function as a field for social interaction between adults and peers. This chapter will attempt to reveal various forms of social interaction, experiences and challenges that youth encounter at schools. It is important to mention that this chapter is not representative of all schools in the research sites, in addition to not representing schools within the greater Western Cape. Firstly, a case study will act as a point of departure to expand on specific challenges that youth encounter at school.

### 5.1. Case study

During a field visit, the research team visited a public school. The school was heavily guarded with steel gates and bars. A security guard manned the heavy, steel gate at the entrance of the school. Burglar bars bolted the windows of the school into brick walls, alongside another two locked steel gates that restricted movement into the reception area. An adult volunteer unlocked the gates and guided the research team to the classrooms where the groups would be facilitated. On the way, the research team passed through a grey-coloured main quad. A clear ceiling closed the quad and lit up the demarcated areas for various sport activities. Classrooms encircled the quad. While waiting, the siren rang and scholars made their way to their next class; top and bottom. As the team continued to move through the school, more locked steel gates were encountered. Finally, the passage leading to the classrooms was reached. The narrow isle led to each classroom and when the gate behind the team was locked again, the isle created a sense of being trapped. Six classrooms were situated on either side of the passage and doors were bolted with steel gates. This created a physical likeness and feeling to that of a secure care facility and correctional institution. At the end of the passage was a solid, brick wall. Dead-end.

The research team was then introduced to a group of learners who were one of the first focus groups of the study. Topics of gangsterism and violence were discussed. As the discussion progressed, a female learner, "Kate", burst into tears. At her request, one of the researchers removed Kate from the group because she felt unsafe to talk. In a new venue, Kate revealed that one of the boys who work for a "big shot gangster" was harassing her. According to her, it was the boy's duty to control information about the gang to teachers or other learners. It was clear that Kate was extremely fearful of this boy. She then shared how the gangsters, who the boy worked for, abducted and sexually assaulted her in the community. She was then

threatened and dumped. Kate continued that she did not trust others to share this with. She sobbed, "They are all together: the police, the gangsters, the drug lords, everyone". Suddenly, there was loud bang on the door. The boy she had feared pushed the door wide open. He had the number 28 marked on his wrist. He insisted that Kate tell him what she was talking about. She lied to him and he then threatened her. The boy then grabbed Kate by the jacket but the researcher and Kate managed to get away.

## **5.2. Violence, safety and drugs on schools**

Based on the case study above as well as data collected from youth in all research sites, the following issues emerged as the challenges that youth have reported experiencing at school.

### **5.2.1. Attempts at creating safety at schools**

Youth narratives were clear in stating that issues of safety, violence and crime were rife in all the research sites. Safety related issues at school were the most discussed topic in the sites. The case study above evidently displays one of the ways in which schools attempt to manage the safety of adults and youth at schools. A participant provided the following description of her school, "That school is full of violence. They sell a lot of drugs at the school. They fight. I don't know if they walk with guns and stuff. There are a lot of fights at that school". Participants stated that youth on youth violence is rife, of which gang violence contributes greatly. Youth expressed feelings of being unsafe despite the evident safety precautions undertaken. Many youth continued to be threatened and the presence of violence and drugs persisted. Youth typically described their schools as prisons. A participant stated, "It's a prison. It looks like a prison". Youth narratives revealed that violence is rife at schools and scholars have expressed feelings of being unsafe. Learners have developed strategies to deal with the threat of violence at schools. A male participant stated, "You go to school and then you know that you have to have a knife or axe on you". This supports the results of the National School Violence Study (NSVS) that was conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention in 2008 indicating that most learners use violence as a legitimate form of resolving conflict (Mampane and Bower: 2011).

### **5.2.2. Gang affiliation on schools**

In a group comprising of males only, participants described how male learners are immediately confronted with safety related issues upon entering a school. A participant from Saldanha described what happens when a male is admitted to high school, "When you get there (high

school) in grade 8, then it looks as if you already have to decide what 'kampie' (camp) you want to be in. If you are from Hopland then you must get involved with those who are from Hopland". It appears as though these young men have adopted a ritual practice that exists in prisons. This ritual encompasses a newcomers pledging allegiance to one of the existing gangs. Upon admission, the newcomer is requested to indicate which gang, which exists within the institution, he will join. A participant expressed the following about the ritual, "It's almost like in the prisons. That's why children don't want to go to school. At schools its only gangsters and the girls become 'prossies' (prostitutes)".

### **5.2.3. The permeability of schools**

The case study above clearly illustrates that the school is a social field where various forms of violence play itself out. This case study further highlights how social issues from the community and school permeate each other. In other words, the social challenges that exist within the community infiltrate the school and vice versa. This understanding can be said to be based within the ecological model; the role of the neighbourhoods in the well-being of the individual is recognised in the mutually interactive relationship (Bronfenbrenner: 1979). Therefore, it can be said that the social fields, the individual, school and community, are not detached from each other. Reflecting on the case study above, Kate's experience in her area was not limited to outside the school. Instead, she continued to be victimised at school as the perpetrator, a gang member in the area, was a scholar at the same school. Here, it is apparent that social actors do not completely detach from the social roles, thoughts and actions that they occupy in other social fields in the area where they reside. Rather, the social actors and climates of the school embody various segments that exist within the community as well. Therefore it can be concluded that social change within the school is contingent on external factors such as the physical areas that youth live in and vice versa. Finally, the case study reveals how the physical and symbolic boundaries between the area, school and its social actors have been eroded. Challenges within the schools appear to be mere extensions of the youth's community life and vice versa. Schools reflect the everyday sociality of the youth. Similarly, the NSVS revealed that violence in schools relates to violence at home (Mampane and Bouwer, 2011). Therefore it is important to understand the social worlds of the schools and its external neighbouring fields such as the life spaces of youth in an attempt to capture the meanings that constantly links both worlds. However, youth experienced various additional challenges that are discussed below.

### 5.3. Teachers and adult volunteers

In a qualitative study, exploring youth transitions in the Cape Town neighbourhoods of Masiphumelele, Fish Hoek and Ocean View respectively, Bray *et al* (2010: 56) stated that youth valued “the physical presence of adults, and their desire to, and demonstration of, support” for young people. In-depth descriptions of the adults youth encounter in the school provide insight into the quality of these relationships in the research sites.

The section that follows will specifically focus on youth interaction with the adults involved at their schools. This chapter will attempt to reveal the perplexed roles that surround teachers and adult volunteers from a community based group focusing on crime prevention. As a youth participant expressed, “They’re (teachers) are just as busy in it all. They (teachers) think that they’re playing the same game with the rest (youth)”.

#### 5.3.1. Verbal abuse and threats

In all the group discussions, youth claimed that teachers and the adult volunteers (who will be further referred to as volunteers) exposed youth to various forms of violence. Learners often communicated feeling disrespected by their teachers and volunteers. Learners in most research sites felt a deep sense of disgust and disappointment in the teachers at their schools. The youth provided examples of what teachers would say, “Read here you (vark) pig!” and “you’re stupid”. Teachers often referred to scholars as “stupid” and female students, not excluding male students, as “gintoes” (referring to a promiscuous individual). Young people stated that teachers often scold at them saying that the scholars are wasting their time. One of the learners said, “Here at this school there is no professionals, just rude people”. As a result to this interaction, learners stated that teachers did not motivate them. A participant angrily said, “The principal is corrupt, rude and doesn’t show any interest in us or the school.” Based on the teachers’ responses, the expected roles of the adults were no different from the youth. Such interaction from the teachers and volunteers further contributes to the violent interaction and feelings of being unsafe at school.

It is however important to mention though that the youth are not necessarily passive recipients of the teacher’s abuse. Learners have confessed to being disrespectful and violent towards teachers as well. “I left school because I was always fighting and disrespecting teachers” said a student. Overall, most youth felt that the teachers had “no connection” with them. Based on the

data above, it is clear that the boundaries between the youth and adults at school were blurred. Some teachers clearly were not assuming their position as professional educators.

### **5.3.2. Sex and Drugs**

Student-teacher roles and actions were similarly enmeshed in the participation of sexual relations and drugs. "Teachers bowl the grade 8 girls. The teacher tells her to come after school to do her work but she has no work to do. Then he is with her (meaning that the teacher has sexual intercourse with the scholar). The girls are hanging out with teachers over the weekends. It happens". This is how a participant described the actions of a male teacher at his school. According to the majority of the participants, sexual relations between teachers and scholars are common. Scholars reported that some sexual interactions between teachers and students were being captured on the cell phones of learners. In a response, several participants explained that female learners developed sexual relations with male teachers because the girls needed financial support. Youth then added that teachers and volunteers were sexually harassing female scholars. A female participant shared that she and her mother reported a teacher for sexual harassment and laid a criminal charge.

Teachers and volunteers were reported to be smoking TIK and cannabis on the school premises. Participants stated that some volunteers were affiliated with different gangs in the area. These adults, especially the volunteers were allegedly smoking cannabis, mandrax and TIK on the school premises. Participants reported that volunteers threatened to beat students with batons as well. Finally, the participants stated that many volunteers' bodies were decorated with tattoos that frequently indicated support for a particular gang. In conclusion, it is clear that there is not much distinction between the actions of teachers, volunteers and youth on school. Instead, the adults appear to be engaging in actions and social worlds that can be defined as that of the youth. Therefore the boundaries between the adults and youth are unclear and fluid, thereby, creating far more complex interactions between these individuals.

## **5.4. The influence of structural inequities on schooling**

Inequity is another recurring theme that youth highlighted as a factor that shapes their schooling. The youth narratives were clear in suggesting that these forms of inequalities influenced their schooling on various levels.

#### **5.4.1. Socio-economic status of the family**

Many participants stated that the financial position of families played a significant role in the quality and continuation or termination of young people's school careers. "The parents' limited contribution through school fees because of their low socio-economic status places most township schools at a disadvantage" (Hoadley: 2007; Lam, Ardington and Leibbrandt: 2010). Many youth stated that the parents of youth themselves are unemployed and unskilled. This view was supported when a participant said that youth assume that they are able to drop-out of school as their parents and grandparents did. He alluded to the current times being more challenging compared to earlier generations. Firstly, participants explained that families are financially unable to afford and maintain their children's schooling. "Most of the parents cannot afford to send their children to school" a participant stated. Another then explained, "People just live day by day. They can't plan because they have no money". The financial status of parents and families extends its influences to the youth's physical needs for school. These include school shoes, uniforms, stationery, to name a few. In a few instances, participants explained that youth leave school earlier because parents are unable to maintain the learner's school needs. Parents are unable to attend to the daily financial pressures of their school-going youth. Such expenses included the transport costs to and from school for example. Due to such restrictions, scholars feel ashamed and then, terminate their schooling earlier. As was clearly stated by a participant, "They (the learners) feel embarrassed if they don't have school clothing".

#### **5.4.2. Leaving school to seek employment**

Discussions with youth revealed that several young people sought employment as a response to the socio-economic positions of their families. The individual agency that youth expressed here however appears to be a double-edged sword. Youth seeking employment to assist their families resulted in young people dropping out. Therefore, despite the good intentions of these youth, many terminated their schooling. In many of the cases mentioned these were the decisions of the youth. There were however cases where youth were coerced to prematurely terminate their schooling. In these cases, youth were expected to contribute to the financial status of their parents and families. For instance, a participant explained how she had to drop out of school to find employment. She said that her parents were struggling financially and as a result, she had to find employment on the farm in an attempt to support them. Regardless of this, youth are only being employed in low paying jobs where they are exploited, as supported by a statement made by a participant about employees, "they (employees) just use you (the youth)". In the same group, they continued to explain that youth are not eligible for permanent employment in view of their age. Yet, the participants stated that learners tried to secure jobs in

an attempt to avoid future unemployment. Youth are therefore making decisions to terminate their schooling and find employment in fear of not finding a job. Youth responded differently to the low financial status of their families and fear of future unemployment. However, what initially is regarded as a 'positive' step towards the youth's development, often hinders the educational advancement of youth. It appears too as though many young people have social roles and responsibilities that negatively affect their educational goals.. Youth are not solely able to concentrate on their schooling. Instead, young people are overwhelmed with various social challenges such as the financial pressures of the families as well as violence in their homes, communities and schools. It is clear that the socio-economic position of the family influenced youth experiences at school on a micro level. The narratives of youth furthermore revealed that social structures that exist on a macro level influence young people's schooling.

#### **5.4.3. Quality of schools and schooling**

"Schooling under Apartheid was characterised by deep inequalities in the allocation of public resources, the quality of education and educational outcomes" (Bray *et al*: 2010). Yet, despite the official abolishment of Apartheid two decades ago, youth, in all the research sites described the vast differences between schools. Participants still referred to the wealthier schools as previously classified "White" schools. Youth call it "White" schools as these schools are still predominantly attended by "White" (wealthier) youth. Firstly, the participants expressed that the physical conditions of their schools, was particularly challenging. Participants stated, "school grounds and buildings are a disgrace and in bad condition" and the "flooring is broken" and "there are no proper toilet seats". It was not uncommon for such statements to lead to comparisons between the "White" schools and the rest. Such comparisons were made in all the research sites. However, as the discussion progressed, youth highlighted issues relating to their schools that were based within larger structural issues such as the lingering consequences of the previous Apartheid system.

In one of the rural areas, participants felt that there was a significant difference between the "White" and "Coloured" schools. Discipline was one of the issues that the youth highlighted. According to the participants, the White schools seemed to encompass a higher level of discipline whereas the Coloured schools displayed no discipline. Participants described how learners could smoke cigarettes on the school premises and teachers would not respond. The youth felt that the White schools had better facilities. When asked what the youth would like to improve at their schools, a participant shouted, "All the things that white people have at their schools". Another participant said, "They (white people) have everything at their schools' and

another continued, "Swimming pools. There are no gangs". Participants outside of the Metropole felt that the White schools were better supported, financially. One of the youth said, "White schools get many donations. Other schools don't. We always have to fight for funds. The white schools even have times when shoes are donated to the schools. But here (in the township) it doesn't happen". Then another participant, who is a father expressed his desperation for his child to attend a "White" school by saying that he would rather continue to sell TIK in order to have money to pay for his child's school fees at the "White" school than having his child attend a Coloured school which is for free.

In addition, youth discussed other issues relating to the quality of schooling as a meaningful factor in their experiences at school. These included issues such as educational programmes and boredom at schools. Firstly, in some instances, participants felt that the quality of their schools have deteriorated due to the discontinuation of various educational programmes. These participants described programmes that provided learners with guidance in applying to colleges and universities. Youth expressed that schooling has become "boring" because of the termination of various programmes such as physical activities.. In one of the groups, a participant said that "there are days when we don't have class because the teacher is not in". As a result, learners become bored because they are not stimulated due to a substitute teacher not being provided. Learners are then unsupervised and leave the school premises to engage in anti-social behaviour such as violence, sexual relations and the use of substances.

Finally, youth questioned the quality and value of their schooling in relation to prospective employment. When participants were asked whether they perceived a matric certificate to be useful, the majority of the youth replied, no. One of the participants said, "No! Many people, friends who have matric and that studied are still without work". Another statement from a participant was, "Many of the children that finished their matric are still at home. They may have finished school 2 years ago or 3 years ago or even last year, but now they doing drugs, are gangsters or have 6 children". In Paarl, a participant stated, "A matric certificate is not worth having nowadays because you still don't get work because you don't have experience. Some matrics even work on the farm". Overall, youth expressed mixed feelings about obtaining a matric certificate. Despite the bleak employment prospects, youth realised the necessity of possessing a matric certificate as exclaimed by a participant when asked if a matric certificate was needed, "Yes!" she said, "because without matric, you can get nowhere". She continued to say "But there are people who complete matric and go study further at a college but then they still cannot get a job".

It was evident from the participants' statements that there remains a huge discrepancy between the different schools in their communities. According to the participants, the distinction between the "White" schools and other schools, attended by learners from other ethnic backgrounds, was translated as a factor contributing to the fate of the youth's success or failure at schools. The youth felt that if their schools were provided with similar physical facilities for instance as were provided in the "White" schools, then youth were presented with a higher possibility of completing their schooling. This perception was reiterated through a participant's statement, "If we (non-white youth and schools) get the opportunities such as youth in the white schools, and we might not have dropped-out of school. They ("White" schools) get donations and help from government. All their ("Whites") children are sorted (taken cared of).

## Chapter 6: Employment and Skills Development

"If more work is created and given to people, then things will change in the community" said a youth participant. Another stated, "More work, less violence". Similar statements such as these were echoed by the majority of participants when discussing employment. The immense value that youth placed on employment was evident throughout the sites. Youth understood employment to be a significant influence in social change. Yet, young people encountered several obstacles in their everyday experiences of finding employment and developing skills to attain employment. This chapter will attempt to highlight several of the diverse challenges that youth experience in employment and skills development, respectively.

### 6.1. Finding employment and its unfolding obstacles

Honwana (2014) examined the challenges of youth transitions in four African case studies. According to Honwana, the majority of African youths are struggling with a lack of jobs and poor education. She continues to state that when youth leave school with minimal skills, they are unable to enter the job market and therefore struggle to become independent. As a result, they stagnate and delay their social recognition as adults. She continues to explain that this state of limbo is not unique to youth in Africa. Instead, youth in Europe, North America and other part of the world experiences similar challenges of joblessness and limited futures. Honwana uses the concept of "waithood" for this liminal period. 'Waithood' was however first used by Navtej Dhillon and Tarik Yousef (2009) and Dianne Sinderman (2007) meaning, "waiting for adulthood". In short, "waithood" refers to a suspension between childhood and adulthood. Many youth participants' expressed a general sense of feeling despondent and disempowered in finding employment. Many openly described their feelings of frustration and exhaustion in their attempts to find employment. As one of the youth said annoyed, "I am tired of looking for a job already. I don't know what I can still do. I feel as though I don't want to look for work anymore. The work must rather come to me". Many participants described how their attempts at completing applications for employment were met with silence, and that they did not receive positive responses to their applications. Youth stated that they experience additional challenges such as the lack of finances and the unavailability of internet access to search for jobs. They experience additional challenges due to their lack of computer skills that prevent them from compiling curriculum vitae, whilst searching and applying for employment.

### **6.1.1. Job requirements**

Youth stated that the employment opportunities offered to them were mainly low paying jobs. A participant said, “All they do is give the youth a broom and expect them to clean the streets”. Another youth participant, typical of other participants, believed that, “If there is an opportunity, many youth don’t want it because of low pay”. As a result, youth felt exploited. “People just use us”. When participants were asked to list the types of jobs that youth occupied in their surroundings, the young people mentioned retail jobs, shop assistants, administrative assistants, farm work (for those in the rural areas) and hairstyling. According to participants in all the research sites, even the requirements for low paying jobs’ requirements was increasing. A participant shared, “For me the challenge for young people is getting a job even if you have matric”. Despite youth attaining a grade 12 pass, youth were still offered low paying jobs. A participant described how matriculants were working as “packers” in the shops. Youth in a site outside the Metro listed gardening and collecting scrap metal as job opportunities for drop-outs. Inevitably, youth are becoming despondent about their employment prospects; especially youth who are untrained and who have not obtained a senior certificate.

Respondents furthermore stated that employment opportunities often require years of experience that many young people do not possess. In one of the focus groups, youth expressed their frustration and questioned how it was expected that they find employment with such high requirements in terms of job experience. The depriving contexts that these youth reside within further intensifies young people’s struggle to find employment, compared to youth who have acquired a senior certificate. A participant stated, “My brother who dropped out of school... he wants a job that he likes but it’s not easy for him to get it because he is not educated. He tried to finish matric but then he bunked”. Participants mentioned that high levels of illiteracy significantly steer the fate of youth employment and training.

### **6.1.2. Temporary employment and volunteering**

The lack of permanency of employment was a recurring challenge for youth in both urban and rural areas. Youth in the Metro referred to this as “temporary” jobs or “odd jobs” whereas participants in the rural areas reported on “seasonal” work. Both temporary and seasonal employment was indicative of the challenges youth experienced in obtaining secure employment. In most cases, youth were not employed permanently. Instead, their employment was based on either the time of the year (seasonal work on the farms) or need (the odd jobs offered). Youth in areas outside the Metro specifically mentioned that employment was mainly of a seasonal nature and only available for short periods of time. To further add to the issue of

temporary employment, youth presented their perceptions on voluntary work. Linked to the challenge of employment and the financial status of young people, voluntary employment is not ideal. A participant stated, "Volunteering is no more an option because life is too expensive". A few other participants made similar statements, to which many other youth participants agreed. Despite this, there were participants who attached importance to volunteering. "I would do voluntary work because that's where you must begin so that people can see that you want to work". It is however evident that youth are challenged to volunteer as these young people are marginalised, both economically and socially.

### **6.1.3. Lack of awareness and corruption**

Participants reported that there is a lack of awareness relating to job opportunities for youth. Youth participants felt that young people were not well-informed of available employment opportunities. This lack of information and awareness existed within tertiary institutions and colleges in relation to employment opportunities. For example, the DSD interns agreed that their peers were not aware of the internships being offered by government. Participants furthermore claimed that corruption negatively influence the likelihood of youth obtaining employment. Many youth participants applied for employment but according to them, their applications were not considered. These youth alleged that nepotism existed and that it influences their employment prospects. The participants said that youth are more likely to obtain employment when a family member is already employed by a company. A participant then said angrily, "Everything is corrupt". Another participant's response was, "Then a person rather smokes (drugs). You get sick of smoking already". A few participants stated that bribery took place. Youth were being offered employment for sexual favours. One of the female participants in a group experienced harassment directly. She explained how she was promised a job by a well-respected resident if she agreed to have sexual intercourse with him. She refused his proposal and subsequently, when he sees her, he says, "you should have slept with me to have a better job". Finally, participants in Saldanha mentioned that locals were "promised" employment with the development of the area but this did not happen as individuals from outside of the community were employed.

### **6.1.4. Competing for jobs**

Participants shared that young people were competing for employment opportunities in their communities. Specific mention was made of the perceived competition between African foreigners and local youth. A participant stated, "Foreigners will work for anything and youth from the area won't work for that amount of money". Youth mentioned that some farm workers and foreigners were willing to work for R60 a day. It became clear from the discussions that

African foreigners posed as competition for the local youth because they were seen as willing to work for longer hours but for less money.

It furthermore appeared as though youth farm workers and foreigners were more flexible and willing to accept certain job conditions and salaries than the local youth. Youth stated that the 'outsider' youth were willing to accept lower standards as their employment conditions. Local youth justified their decision to not accept specific employment conditions within the discourse of human rights. In other words, the local youth felt that they were protecting and exercising their human rights by not accepting certain working conditions. For instance, some of the youth in De Doorns proclaimed that the "boers" will not employ the local youth because such youth are "wise". According to the participants, local youth are aware of their "rights" and will not allow themselves to be exploited. Further tension seemed to arise when youth discussed the creation of own businesses. A participant explained how he attempted to start his own business but was unable to compete with foreigners in his community. This participant explained, "They (the foreigners) buy in bulk so now they can sell their items for less money. As a result, the participant's employment initiative did not succeed. It is however important to mention that due to the limited employment opportunities that generally exist, a competitive atmosphere dwell amongst the local youths themselves. A few participants claimed that people are underhanded and will make attempts at compromising the job security of others.

Participants who were not looking for work, provided some of the following reasons for not trying to find work in the four weeks before the research: being underage, attending school and participating in other recreational activities. Others stated that they applied for jobs but were unsuccessful, did not have travelling fare, matriculated and took a break from studies, language barriers, personal challenges and work places situated too far geographically.

## **6.2. Challenges for youth skills development**

### **6.2.1. Possession of informal skills**

During research activities, participants were questioned on their acquired skills. Youth mentioned that their skills included upholstery, spray painting, woodworking, carpentry, grinding, welding, to name a few. Generally, youth provided examples of various skills that they believed they have acquired. However, these skills were not formally acquired. Only a handful of participants stated that they had received formal skills training. In one of the focus groups, a young male explained how he was able to repair computers which allowed him to maintain a certain degree of financial independence but as he stated, "I don't have the papers". Participants mentioned

that young people possessed and excelled in skills such as dancing and singing. However, youth did not receive any formal training in these areas mainly due to a lack of funding and opportunities.

### **6.2.2. Financial limitations**

Youth participants attempted to explain why they were unable to secure formal training. One of the issues highlighted was the financial positions of the youth and their families. A participant stated, "Here are no bursaries even available for us. Maybe if they can give us bursaries to go study just to have something behind our name. Even if it's just for a college but here is nothing here. I am really tired of sitting at home. I feel demotivated already and the farm is probably the only solution now". Another participant expressed, "Here is nothing. I wanted to do nursing... I wanted to become a paramedic as well but had no money to do the course". Such statements reveal how the financial position of youth can move into related aspects. Youth mentioned that the majority of youth are unable to strive towards tertiary education due to financial constraints. Many of the youth referred this type of challenge as a "household challenge". A participant mentioned that there are skills training programmes that require a fee. Another participant mentioned a computer course that he wanted to attend but the course fees was too expensive. Overall, participants in this group felt that youth are unable to provide financial payment for such training programmes. These participants mentioned that many training programmes were rather expensive and due to the existing financial conditions of the youth, these young people are unable to attend.

### **6.2.3. Access and availability to programmes**

Youth mentioned that opportunities for formal skills training were not well advertised. The poor advertising of skills training was an issue that was mentioned in the majority of the research sites. In one of the sites, youth alleged that young people were often "promised" that government programmes and training was going to be presented. However, according to these participants, these programmes were never offered. Youth highlighted that training programmes were rarely presented in their communities. Similarly, youth were dissatisfied with their employment and skills development prospects within their area and as a result, a group of male youth reported that they were planning to attend training in Cape Town instead. These youth felt that they had to leave their community in an attempt to promote personal development.

#### **6.2.4. Young people's personal limitations**

Participants mentioned that many youth lack basic skills, for example, computer skills, that are required in order to pursue employment opportunities. Consequently, such youth are incapable of compiling a curriculum vitae that influences their overall employment prospects of youth. Due to the youth being unable to use a computer and consequently, not possess a curriculum vitae, such an individual was unable to provide employees with one of the most necessary items for employment applications. It was clear though from some of the participants' statements that they would be able to succeed with the proper guidance and training. A participant stated that it would help him greatly if he could be guided in terms of finding employment. In addition, participants stated that illiteracy was an issue as it was a consequence of school dropouts and poor quality education.

#### **6.2.5. Quality of training programmes**

An additional challenge related to skills development that youth encountered was the quality of the training and the follow-up training sessions. According to a discussion held with DSD interns, participants suggested that youth would be interested in attending skills development programmes. However, the participants stated that youth chose not to attend skills development programmes that were not accredited. This perception however appeared to mainly relate to that of youth such as the DSD intern who have received some formal training or further education. It was mentioned in a focus group that some youth were not motivated to attend training opportunities, as in their view, it was unlikely to improve employment prospects. In other words, youth did not attend the training because according to many youth, skills development did not appear to improve their job prospects. Finally, the youth who had attended skills development programmes stated that after attending the training, no follow up training took place. In other words, no development or additional training is provided to further skills participants.

## Chapter 7: THE SOCIAL NATURE OF YOUTH AND GANGS

Youth have expressed diverse forms of individual agency within the socio-economic-political fields that they manoeuvre within. Gang membership emerged as one of the multiple pathways that various young people have occupied. This chapter will attempt to move beyond the moral panic and oversimplified understanding of youth gangs as a criminological entity within a rather static discourse; thereby overlooking the nuances relating to youths' gang involvement. Instead, the chapter will seek to provide a deeper understanding that relates to the social nature and complexities of youth gangs and the social actors who participate within. The youth narratives of young people affiliated to gangs themselves will provide the basis of this chapter.

### 7.1. Performing gang identity

Based on Judith Butler's work on gender, the concept of 'performativity' deemed useful in the discussion on youth gangs. In her work on gender development, Butler sees gender as a rehearsed act that is continuously repeated. She states that performativity places importance on the ways in which identity is personified through discourse. Butler (1990) presents gender as "a stylized repetition of acts... which are internally discontinuous... [so that] the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief". A similar understanding and approach has been utilised in this chapter on youth gangs.

"They're always standing looking tough". This was how a participant humorously described his fellow gang members. His statement was linked to an earlier experience that the young men encountered before attending the focus group. The youngsters explained how policemen randomly frisked them while they were waiting to be transported to the meeting. Participants stated that they had to provide the officials with identification and an explanation of their gathering on the streets. Such responses to youth gangs and members are not surprising. In the notion of performativity, such as the workings of Judith Butler on gender performativity, gang identity is a display that is constantly acted out. The performativity of gangs and gangsters includes a range of behaviours that include the way these individuals walk, how they talk, dress, use their bodies, engage in certain rituals, to name a few. These behaviours are constantly performed to create the gang identity; this is how an individual must perform the role of a gangster to be a gangster. The young men confirmed that they 'performed' such behaviour since their pre-adolescent years and at present; other pre-adolescents are performing the

gangster image. A participant stated, "The stuff that these others (younger gangsters) are doing now, we did 10, 15 years back. I was 13 years old. We shot people, whatever".

Another participant then claimed, "If we get work, then that part won't be working anymore like 'Gigolo', 'Lelik' because you are at work now". This intriguing statement supported the young men's assumption that employment would eradicate gang performance. It was clear that these young men possessed multiple 'faces' that are dependent on situations and social contexts. The 'gangster face' is distinct from other social roles and performances that could include a brother, father, son, to name a few. An example of the multiplicity of these young men's roles and identities was evident in a group held in Saldanha. Two gang members had to bring their daughters to the group discussion because they had to care for their daughters, while their female partners were at work. One of the fathers prematurely left the group as he had to care for his daughter who had soiled her nappy. These examples highlight the fluidity of the roles and performances of these young men at a particular time and space.

These young men perform particular 'faces' based on their understandings of the situation. Therefore, the gang member is not performed at every moment and sphere of the young men's lives. Instead, the youth narratives suggest that gang performativity is required more in some instances and less in others. "I can walk into anyone's house and they won't even know that I'm a gangster just because of the respect that I'll show inside their houses and for the person that I am", said one of the participants. Another stated, "In our community, people still respect us. They will still tell us to come inside and drink with them or to come inside their homes". The intensity of the gang performance changes as the young men see fit.

Likewise, age and life stages played a significant role in the intensity of gang performativity. Gang performativity appeared less intense among the older men compared to the younger. The young members were seen as more violent and unpredictable. An older member stated, "We're not like that. Like those people who kill others". Another said, "We don't have guns. We don't stab people and we don't rob people". The group then continued that it is not possible to exit the gang life entirely but their roles can change. "You can't get out (of the gang) but you can make a difference now".

## 7.2. Youth, gangs and decision-making

### 7.2.1. Individual choice and gang affiliation

Narratives revealed that gang membership was a thought-through process for many of the young men. The youth explained their decision making processes that led to their affiliation. Simultaneously, the complexities relating to gang affiliation was exposed. A participant expressed, "One doesn't necessarily join the gangs for wrong reasons. Many youth join the gangs to survive. The gangs provide them with work, protection and money". The issue of choice was constantly debated in these groups. Understandings of gang affiliation were either a consequence of individual choice or circumstantial. A participant explained why he joined a gang at 13 years old, "Being ignorant. Being stupid. Making my eyes big for things that wasn't supposed to be in my time like drugs, guns, girls, drinking". Youth, especially older youth, often individualised their gang affiliation. A participant said, "We had good chances in life. We come out of decent homes. We have parents that really care for us. We messed up..." Similarly, another member said, "My brother looked up to me and now he is 20 years in prison. I had to get out of gangsterism to prove a point and yet he went to prison. It doesn't matter what I had done. He made the choice in life..." Such understandings placed the emphasis on youth's individual choices to join a gang, thereby undermining and overlooking how structural influences impacted their decisions.

According to Merton (1957), the strain theory that dominated gang theorising in the mid and late 1900's emphasised the role that social structures within society played in pressuring individuals to commit crimes, in the form of underclass theory (Calix: 2013). This approach to understanding criminal activity suggested that the incoherence between what the social structure avails through limited legitimate opportunities places significant strain on the population who desires a goal that they cannot reach through conventional means (Merton: 1957). Merton therefore suggests that criminal activity is a result of this social situation.

### 7.2.2. Financial instability and masculinity

Various other gang members did however reflect on the importance of their social contexts and its influence on their lifestyles. A participant indirectly reflects on the structural influences, "People who have privileges: if they have lots of stuff that their parents can provide them with like games and stuff, like financially; then they won't end up like us who are in the ghetto. Now when they have that stuff, they are indoors and they are ok. Now we, who don't have that, every day, we must stand outside because if you lay in the house, you going to get nothing. So

when you go out of your gate, you know its life or death... We have to go on with our daily lives. To survive, if we are not going to do that, then we're not going to survive... We have to take that risk every day". Here, the participant described how financial capital influenced the lifestyle of youth and steered their life trajectory. Another participant stated, "The ultimate thing is the providing factor. See, if you can't provide for your family, you're a 'nobody'. You're a 'nothing'. So what are you going to do? You're going to go out. You're going to do the unthinkable just for a plate of food". In this statement, and many others like it, the issue of masculinity is presented; these young men have fallen trap to the mainstream ideologies of being a man in society. Due to the mainstream societal messages that men are expected to be the main providers for their families, marginalised men have created alternative means, namely gang affiliation, to attain that position.

### **7.2.3. Gang affiliation and spatial geographies**

Youth explained how physical spaces played a role in gang affiliation. A participant shared, "It depends on the area you stay in. If you stay in an area where there are many 28's and you walk somewhere else then others will think that you are also part of the 28's... and that's how it starts". Youth then discussed how young people sought social support and physical protection through gang affiliation. Young people explained how gang members joined gangs in an attempt to protect and create safety for themselves in the unsafe, social and physical spaces that they manoeuvre within. A youth, who was affiliated with one of the gangs, said, "You get beef at school and then you go home from school. Then your friends are gangsters and then you ask them if they can't help you out and then, you owe them. Now you're in it. You can't get out. And when they do something wrong, they come fetch you. And then you just have to continue with that business (gangsterism). That's what happens in Delft".

### **7.2.4. Economic empowerment, social inclusion and cohesion**

Socio-economic factors have long been considered to be significant in explaining why youth are drawn into crime, violence and drugs (Calix: 2013; Ward, van der Merwe, Dawes: 2012). Gang affiliation however not only provides the possibility of improving financial status but similarly social capital. A few gang members explained that joining a gang sometimes created a sense of financial gain and freedom. A participant stated, "Gangsterism plays the biggest role in this area. Every child wants to be a Timbaland or a Cool Catz". This was followed by another participant who justified, "Because that's where the money is man". A third participant then continued, "Yes that's where the friends are, the lekker things happen there like alcohol and smoking. Now every child wants to be in that". Feelings of social inclusion, respect and admiration was repeatedly mentioned. In addition, an overstated degree of social cohesion

existed amongst members. This was evident in the group discussion. Participants said, "When you stand together, you stand together" and "We help each other. Here a little bit of work and there a little bit of work". Yet the participants still communicated a sense of individuality between themselves. "You are still your own person; you still make your own choices" and "It's just that you're a clique together".

The young men continued to explain that "you become someone" when you hold a gun, shoot someone, are imprisoned and become a prison gang member. Another participant revealed further complexities when he added that youth participate in such actions because there is some form of financial gain. "All of this just for R1000, R2000, then he'll do it". His peers supported him, "They get paid to do it yes. But it depends on you, if you do or don't want to do it. You need that money". This perception was challenged by another youth who concluded, "It isn't only about that (the money). It's also about getting the necessary attention".

### **7.3. Attempts and challenges at improving life**

In the field of criminology, crime has been examined over the life trajectories of individuals (Farrington: 2003). Three distinct periods have been emphasised: onset, continuity and desistance. Similarly, gang involvement took the course of youth joining gangs, participating in gang activity and finally, leaving gangs (Hastings, Dunbar and Bania: 2011). Hastings *et al* (2011: 4) states that desistance literature supports the notion that offenders exit crime as a result of a combination of factors including maturation and aging, social bonds and institutions as well as social structures and social learning. Some of these determining factors will be discussed later in this chapter.

"We also want work. We also want to talk about the good. But no good things come our way. There are also no people who are standing up for us. There are not even games or game shops. There are only places that sell alcohol", shared a participant. This was the general outlook and feeling that these marginalised young males expressed when asked if they wanted better for their lives. It was clear that these young men aspired for improvements in their lives, despite facing several challenges in achieving these objectives. Most participants possessed a certain degree of awareness to the various social challenges that they were confronted with. For example, these young males battled with whether their gang affiliation was a consequence of their individual will or a response to structural challenges. "People must know me for who I am, not for the choices I made. Or, the choices that I want to make to clear my name". This is the response from a participant on exiting youth gangs. Additional comments such as "everyone

sitting here knocked their heads already" and "if they mess up now, then they must be shot," a participant jokingly said. These were some of the statements that emerged through the youth's narratives in relation to youth exiting gangs, change and the betterment of life in every group discussion. The youth narratives however revealed that these youth explored various strategies aimed at changing their lifestyles, for example, obtaining employment and exiting gang affiliation.

It became clear that youth were not passive bystanders within the positions they occupied and that they were actively attempting to shift their life trajectories. Although socially and economically limited, youth endeavoured to create opportunities for change. As one of the participants shared, "I had my own soccer club. I had my own carpentry company and messed up big time. I was married but then got divorced. That was when my soccer club ended that career and with my work, having that pressure of never having enough money for the project and getting the right people to help your business... that all just deteriorated. So you try to bring something positive but then you get that people who will just bring you down".

Another participant shared the complexities related to his attempt at pro-social behaviour and the impact of real life circumstances on decisions and behaviour. "I'm very good with my hands. So I do a lot of work. Recently I did a bit of bad things but in that process, I also done things with my hands that I am actually proud of". He continued to share how the man he had worked for accused him of stealing and as a result, attempted to kill him. The participant concluded, "I'm still going forward. If you don't want to be involved in gangsterism or any illegal activity, it's your prerogative. It's your choice". Apart from the static understanding attached to youth who are affiliated to gangs, these marginalised young men attached extensive value to employment. According to these youth, employment is one of the key determinants in steering youth away from gang activity. However, as the discussions progressed, the young males revealed that youth gangs would not dissipate despite the increased of employment opportunities for youth. When asked what would happen to the gangs if the members were employed, their responses included, "The gang will still be there" and "the brother love is still there". Therefore, a simple creation of employment is far too basic for such a complex social issue. Yet, the perspectives of the young men revealed that specific instances and attempts to practise and adopt pro-social behaviours existed. Regardless of the challenges, these young males still aspired to improve their circumstances and that of their families.

### 7.3.1. Striving for financial independence

The focus groups further revealed that these young men were striving to create employment opportunities and financial stability for themselves and their families. A participant jokingly described how youth always have to “skarrel<sup>2</sup>” for money on a daily basis. The participant explained that they (the gang members) “skarrel” for taxi money, cigarettes, sodas, for instance. This was followed by another participant who quickly challenged the suggestion that all the participants “skarrel”. He then explained how he downloaded movies onto compact disks and sold these to make money. He however continued in saying that this attempt was unsuccessful because it was too expensive for him to sustain as a means to gain capital. This was due to the cost of having to buy ink for the printing of the labels and movie pictures from the internet. The participant shared how he walked to the homes of prospective customers and on returning home, he had to share his earnings with his mother. As a result, he explained how he was then left with not much funds to maintain his own needs and to buy CD's to sell for the next day. This did not even include the risk of being caught by police officials and being jailed as a result.

Many of the young males revealed their attempts at finding legitimate employment opportunities. The majority of the participants described the challenges they encountered when searching for employment opportunities. For example, one of the participants explained that he struggled to find new employment after leaving an earlier employment position that he had occupied. According to the participant, he struggled to secure a new job as a result of black empowerment appointments. He described having to “beg and plea” for applications, only for the post to be occupied by a Black African; resulting in his employment search to continue for 5 or 6 months but still with no success. Youth attempts at improving their lives were rather short lived and less successful. However, youth shared that there are factors that can create a shift in the social life trajectories of youth gang members of which can sustain for longer periods of time, if not a life time.

## 7.4. Becoming a father

Prior research on the desistance process and becoming a parent has produced mixed results (King, Massoglia and MacMillan: 2007; Giordano, Seffrin, Manning and Longmore: 2011). In contrast to this, empirical data gathered in this study, suggests that becoming a father had the potential to be an important catalyst for young men, affiliated to gangs, to make significant life changes. The birth of a child resulted in many young males creating pathways to exit gangs and

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<sup>2</sup> “Skarrel” means to ‘hang out’ and loiter with the intention of gaining things such as money, cigarettes, food, etc.

attempting a more socially accepted lifestyle. A participant stated that he joined a gang to gain access to money, women and drugs but then continued, "And then it came to when I had my first kid, my only kid. I didn't want that for him. So I had to step out". When he was asked what he had to do to exit the gang, he said, "It's very hard. I confronted them and said that I was changing my life". Entering fatherhood appeared to provide some young males with the opportunity to transform their lives for longer-standing periods. The narratives of these young males showed that once they had become fathers, these young men desired different pathways for their children. One participant expressed his desire for his children, "I don't want that for my children. I really don't want that for my kid. My kid is in matric this year". It became apparent that these young fathers desired the lifestyles that were socially acceptable in mainstream society such as completing their schooling, finding employment, marriage, to name a few.

Young fathers in the group discussions revealed anxiety and fear relating to their children and gang affiliation. Fathers provided various responses when asked how they would deter and encourage alternative social avenues for their children from gang affiliation. One participant explained how he had made a choice to have less contact with his son in an attempt to protect his child from youth gangs. This father said, "I tried not to involve him in my life because my life is not going as well as I want it to go. So I don't see him as often as I want to. So I saw him last 4 or 5 years ago. But I know that he is doing well. But he knows that his father is still alive. So what I do today in my life reflects on my son. I don't want his name to be tarnished with my crap that I did". When asked what they as fathers would do if their children were seduced to join gangs, a participant responded, "I'll shoot them (the gang members). I'll kill them. Knock on his (gang member) door and then ask his mother where he is, and then when he comes to the door, I'll shoot him". Another participant then described how his father chased gang members with a weapon when they tried to recruit him as a member. One of the other young fathers continued, "That tree (child) has to be bent now". But then another participant added, "You can bend the tree" and then another respondent said, "You become worse". A participant stated, "We were all bent". His peers then all agreed that attempts were made to 'bend' them with minimal success. Many participants stated that social learning and role modelling was most influential in deterring their children from youth gangs. A participant commented "He (the child) will learn from me". Another young father was asked how he would keep his son from joining a gang. His response was, "I know already where it all starts. It starts at smoking". This explanation of youth gangs and gang affiliation could be too simplified when dealing with a social issue that is clearly more multifaceted than the static, criminological approach that is too frequently attached to it.

## **Chapter 8: YOUTH UNDERSTANDINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS WITH FORMAL AND INFORMAL SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN THEIR DAILY LIVES**

Despite the majority of participating young people being exposed to different levels of deprivation in their lives, the youth narratives revealed how these young people impress upon the worlds in which they navigate. Due to the youth constructing their own understandings of their daily lives and social contexts, youth participants were able to reflect on diverse factors that they understood had a positive influence in their lives. This chapter will therefore highlight specific influences that participants understood and experienced as contributing positively to their development through youth narratives. The chapter will report on formal and informal positive influences. In addition, some of the challenges youth experienced during their engagements with such support structures will be presented.

### **8.1. Informal positive influences**

#### **8.1.1. The mind-sets of youth**

“You are not a product of your circumstances but you are a product of your choices”. “It’s the choices that one takes and the way that you live that makes you who you are”. Such statements of youth emphasised the reasoning that led to positive behaviour in young people. Certain youth were able to allow their reasoning to avoid joining gangs for instance. A participant stated, “My father is a number (prison gang member) but I made my decision. I don’t want to be like him. I want to be better than him. It depends on you. I saw it’s not the right way to go”. The emphasis that youth placed on their individual agency and decision making greatly influenced the overall functioning of young people. Youth narratives revealed that young people believed that their individual behaviour was the reason for their development for instance. Youth suggested that their lives were mainly determined and contingent on their individual actions and thinking. Therefore, even though youth were marginalised at various levels, perceiving themselves as active agents in their environments brought about positive change for many.

#### **8.1.2. Purpose, generosity and empathy**

The majority of youth expressed a certain degree of social responsibility. This sense of responsibility among youth existed in all the research sites. The youth commonly referred to it as “giving back” to their community. Youth shared their need to encourage and empower other youth who were less fortunate than themselves. Youth who adopted such reasoning provided

themselves with a sense of purpose. These youths' narratives suggested that these young people interact differently in their surroundings. "There are many occasions where we as friends, sit together and discuss possible things that we can do for our community. This is a way how we can bring changes. At times we do play rugby and soccer with the children, just to keep them off the streets". Youth who were able to socially mobilise themselves out of less desirable situations were especially "giving back". A participant said, "Some of us that are now on the streets try our best to tell those who are still in school to stay in school, because it are not easy on the streets, and it might not always be a good life". Emic perspectives of the youth revealed that "giving back" created feelings of connectedness, worth and satisfaction.

### **8.1.3. Youth and religious belief systems**

Religion proved to be a positive influence in the life trajectories of youth. Young people's participation in faith based organisations and activities helped to shift life trajectories as well as providing support in their daily lives. Belief systems appeared to be a tool in shifting and steering youth reasoning and actions. A participant stated, "I was very chaotic as a young girl. I fought a lot but then I asked God to give me the energy to be a better person for my child and mother". Different belief systems provided psychological support for young people confronted with life stressors. "I plan a better future for me compared to what I have now. I ask God to help me. I ask every day and night for God to help me, and I see that I am slowly on my way to becoming a better person; to help me with the things that I am going through especially the wrong things that I am still busy with" said a participant. Another participant from Mitchell's Plain added, "In order to better my situation I ask the Lord to help me out of the situation I am finding myself in." It became clear that religion was adopted as an alternative pathway for youth. The internalisation of religious beliefs altered young people's thinking and behaviour. Religion was demonstrated to be vital in youth's desistance from crime and gang affiliation and overall, seemed to build a certain form of resilience in the young people.

### **8.1.4. Family influence and becoming a parent**

Family resilience was identified as a positive influence in youth development. Resilient families proved to be significant in the lives of the youth. Youth characterised "good" families as warm, nurturing and supportive. Many youth participants shared that their families were supportive and inspired them to attend school, explore tertiary education, choose friends wisely and be ambitious in life. A participant stated, "My family will always try to motivate me and tell me to take care of my child." Similarly, another participant added, "All my family members support each other very much." Youth shared stories about the sacrifices that their parents made for

them. One participant said, "My mother has done too many things for me already in my life and I will always be grateful to her. I appreciate my mother because she gave me her all". Based on the youth narratives, the role of the mother was significant in the lives of young people. The majority of youth shared that their mothers were almost always their pillars of strength.

Youth furthermore explained that their mothers were their pivotal support in gaining an education. Finally, despite the negative connotations that are often attached to early parenthood, a few participants described a different experience. Youth becoming parents themselves created a positive shift in their lives. For some youth, becoming parents added new meaning and direction in their lives. A participant stated, "I made a huge change in my life to move on and away from friends, I now have better things to do and to focus on. I have a family and I cannot go out with friends because it's not going to bring me anywhere."

#### **8.1.5. Positive role models and community members**

Youth characterised their roles models as supportive, inspiring, encouraging and caring. Based on discussions with youth, it became clear that there were two main reasons why individuals were considered to be role models. Firstly, role models were those who supported others in the areas that they reside. "There is always someone who is willing to help you". Another participant stated, "The YMCA worker is my role model, as he does a lot for the community and will always help if people ask advice". Secondly, youth defined their role models as resilient individuals. In other words, people who were able to excel in their deprived contexts and who were able to leave lives of drugs and youth gangs. These individuals included recovering drug addicts and reformed gang members. Based on the youth's reasoning, it was clear that youth attached the label of role model to people who extended their support to others as well as to individuals who displayed a high degree of resilience.

## **8.2. Formal positive influences**

The next section of the chapter will focus on formal influences that youth regarded and experienced as being positive in their functioning. Emic perspectives of several youth participants implied that the following formalised support structures played an integral part in the lives of young people and their overall wellbeing.

### **8.2.1. Treatment services for substance abuse**

Participants shared reports of social services and support structures in their areas that can be regarded as successful. These included some form of interaction with and support received from government services that have resulted in positive outcomes in the lives of young people.

As the issue of substance abuse appears to be overwhelming in all the research sites, one such example is the case study of a participant who sought assistance from the government services as a recovering addict. In the interview with this participant, she had the following to say about her experience when seeking support from the government services in her community. This young female participant expressed intense feelings of gratitude, relief and happiness when she imparted her story and the assistance she received from the day hospital in her community. She stated, "I am grateful for what I have and where I am today. The help that I got from counselling and all the social workers, it helped. I would like other youth to get the support that I got. I became a patient at the local clinic. I went every day for my injections, my tablets, and my vitamin tablets to build me up again. Because drugs break you down. It eats you up from the inside." She then continued, "I would go every second to third day to the clinic. I just wanted to show them at the clinic that I can do it. They would tell me that I am putting on weight and doing better." This participant explained that even though she was recovering, she was still utilising the services and support of the staff at the local clinic. She explained, "I still go for counselling. It helped me a lot. I feel that I can now carry on, on my own."

### **8.2.2. Youth skills development programmes**

While the discourse relating to skills development and training of young people lends to the positive experiences of such programmes, youth shared their challenges relating to such programmes. The youth who have undergone skills training have communicated that their need for support is far beyond that of developing skills. These young people have requested for an intervention that extends the basic training that they have experienced. Therefore, the following section of this chapter will present the benefits and challenges of such a programme.

#### **8.2.2.1. NGO Programme**

Youth and professionals alike provided a consensus that successful skills development programmes existed for youth. One of the programmes that were considered to be successful for the youth was a DSD funded programme in a site outside the Metro. "This programme was implemented to motivate us as youth and to look forward to our life", stated a participant. Other youth had this to say, "The programmes were implemented to motivate us as youth and to look forward to our life", and "I have learnt a lot, my personality has grown, I have become more self-

confident, and I have gotten the opportunity to attend youth programmes". Youth who attended this programme, have expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the facilitators and the programme itself. A participant stated: "In skills development we learn how to draw up a CV and in the youth leadership group we learn about anger management and self-identity". Additional statements about the programme were, "We had no future goals but now we have learnt how to make money quickly". Two participants in one of the groups stated that they were planning to start their own food business. Other participants expressed, "We have learnt that, you are not a product of your circumstances but you are a product of your choices" and "We have learnt different skills such as drama, arts and craft and leadership skills".

Youth furthermore provided insight regarding another successful youth programme where the state provided youth with an opportunity to attain their driver's license. This was followed by another participant who volunteers at an organisation, funded by DSD, who described that the programme dealt with issues around HIV and TB. In addition, it assisted learners academically with their curriculum subjects. The volunteer stated that she witnessed the changes that some of the participants to this programme experienced. However, the NGO and its programme had to close down because of a lack of funding.

#### **8.2.2.2. *DSD Internship programme***

According to the youth participants, another successful initiative was the internship programme funded by DSD. Interns, who were employed in the Paarl area, were positive about the internship programme and expressed gratitude for the opportunity. A participant stated, "I enjoy working here. I meet new people, help social workers and I learn something new from the internship every day." Another DSD intern communicated the following of the DSD internship programme, "It's a privilege because many youth who are not working are on the streets. They are busy with criminal activities or gangsterism. It's a privilege but I would like to help them." A similar understanding was reiterated during a discussion with a community development practitioner. He stated that DSD plays a huge role in youth development. He explained that the number of youth who used these services, were on the increase and that young people were considering the opportunities provided by government.

### **8.3. Suggestions towards further improvement**

#### **8.3.1. Improve management of services**

During the discussions with youth, the majority of young people indicated that they were poorly informed about the formal social services and support structures available to them. Youth

communicated a sense of 'being let down' and that they were socially distant and marginalised. Many of the young people's perceptions included feelings of isolation, abandonment, disappointment and having been forgotten. A participant stated, "The youth are struggling, here is nothing really that happens that's why the youth just doesn't care about their lives anymore". Similarly, another participant added, "I don't see a place here for young children where they can go and keep them busy. Here is nothing that can keep them busy, all they do is drink alcohol and smoke." This phrase, "keep them busy" was used quite often when discussing various aspects relating to the daily lives of the youth. Professionals, as well as, youth would state that young people must be kept "busy" at school and in the communities to minimise their involvement with less desired behaviour. As a result, youth expressed that one of the ways in which the state can "keep youth busy" is to provide them with various forms of services and support. A participant proclaimed, "The allocation of services and programmes needs to be looked at". It was apparent that the majority of youth agreed on this in the different areas. This feeling was expressed in all the different research sites.

### **8.3.2. Creating awareness of youth programmes**

A participant stated, "There is no awareness created around the services and or programmes being offered". This view was supported by another participant who indicated that "A lot of things are kept away. A lot of the youth don't know about things. There are things for the youth, but it is being kept away. Nothing is being advertised". Participants felt that greater attention should be given to the marketing of these social services and structures. "There needs to be better marketing of events". This perception was held by many other participants. As already mentioned, engaging the media could be a key strategy for effective advocacy to reach and inform youth about available support services.

### **8.3.3. Improve access to social services and support**

Youth expressed clear frustration when they stated that in their view, social services and support structures were focused in specific areas aimed at particular communities. The participants stated that resources were unfairly distributed in these areas, only reaching certain recipients. This unfair access to services existed within the areas itself. In other words, specific parts of an area and its residents often experienced easier access to such services. A participant stated, "The community should be made aware about the programmes offered because only certain people know about the programmes". These perceptions of unfair distribution of services for youth were discussed within the paradigm of race relations. A youth furiously expressed, "Now look at us Coloureds for example, it's not like I am racist but if you go to college, who is the majority? It's mostly the blacks, us coloureds, where will you mostly find us, in jail. And this is the

problem that we have. They (Black Africans) know more about the stuff, like free bursaries than we do". Based on these responses of the youth, it becomes clear that youth attach significant value to the possible impact that social services and support structures could essentially have in their lives. It appears as though the participants understand the services and support to possess high levels of influence and therefore, act as vital agents for social change. It was equally disturbing to note the racialised world views of many youth and the intolerance and prejudice this contributes to.

#### **8.3.4. Establish extended programmes and post-training support**

One of the most common challenges expressed in the youth narratives regarding skills development and training was the short-term support that youth received. Young people who attended different skills development training stated that their participation in the programmes did not improve their employment prospects. One participant stated, "I attended Chrysalis and I even did training there but then came back to my area. All I wanted was a stable life because I am a single parent but because here is no work, it is easy to go back into drugs." Participants who were criminal offenders and have re-entered society expressed that during incarceration, they were exposed to skills development training. However, participants communicated that their experiences of searching for employment was rather difficult. A participant stated, "We cannot find a job with the skills we have learnt in jail". Here, youth felt supported whilst in training. However, it was their experience that the support was limited.

Youth were provided with opportunities to develop their skills but were unable to implement their skills due to the lack of employment opportunities, among other challenges. Many young people felt abandoned after receiving training as further support was scarce and non-existent. Youth suggested that organisations should provide young people with skills development as well as support in finding employment. As mentioned earlier, challenges that youth have reported with regards to official social services and support structures include feelings of social exclusion as well as the unfair distribution of social services and physical resources in the areas.

#### **8.3.5. South African Police Services (SAPS)**

Due to youth exposure to high levels of crime and violence in the research sites, several suggestions were made regarding the improvement of SAPS services. Participants suggested the following to improve the services provided by SAPS. Firstly, in terms of creating safer spaces, young people stated that their areas needed more police stations to curb crime, violence and especially gangsterism. Youth felt that greater police visibility in their communities was needed. In one of the Metro sites, similar to the rest of the research sites, a participant communicated the

following about the police services in the area, "Something needs to be done about the corruption between the gangsters and the police men". Another participant in added, "You can't go to the local police because most of them are corrupt". In all the research sites, youth expressed a high degree of frustration and distrust with the police services within their areas. This mistrust of the police services created rather complicated situations. For example, a female youth shared her experience of a traumatic personal life event. When she was asked if she sought any support, she stated, "I don't trust anyone. If I tell my mother, then she will expect me to go to the police and make a case. They are all together; the police, the gangsters and the drug lords. Everyone. I will just keep this to myself".

Based on the perceptions and experiences of youth participants it was clear that young people did not consider police services to be reliable. Instead, the youth communicated that SAPS required extensive improvement. As a result, the young people have lost faith in the police services' ability to protect them and create a safe environment. However, despite the negative impression that the participants communicated during the discussions, youth nevertheless felt that perpetrators of any form of crime and violence should be punished and held accountable for their actions. Therefore, despite the perceived normalisation of violence and substance abuse within the areas, youth strongly communicated that perpetrators of crime and violence had to be held accountable for their actions. Youth suggested that perpetrators should be incarcerated and that "merchants" distributing drugs should be closed down.

#### **8.3.6. Professionals' suggestions to improve youth social services**

Professionals, who worked alongside the youth, were in agreement with the views that young people held regarding social services and support structures. Both youth and professionals stated that social services and support structures still needed extensive development. The perspectives of the professionals however emphasised the functional and operational aspects of the social services and support structures. Professionals suggested that the programmes offered by the state should be more consistent and sustainable. These professionals suggested that the programmes directed at the youth should be facilitated over a longer period of time. A few professionals recommended that programmes should be provided over one to two years; not only a few sessions. The availability of funds for socials and support structures was an additional concern for professionals. They stated that the improvement of funding conditions for the services and support structures would improve the functioning and consistency of both the youth programmes and young people.

## 9. DISCUSSION

Academic discourse related to post-Apartheid South Africa encompasses that of equality and opportunity for all. Current prospects are presented as having been inaccessible and almost non-existent to earlier generations, especially for Black Africans. Although social change has taken place for many, the majority of children and youth continue to live in poverty (Meintjes and Hall: 2008). In addition, Bray *et al* (2010: 21) stated that the now democratic South Africa “did not usher in a golden age of equal opportunities for all children”; similarly, for youth within the post-Apartheid era. Therefore, two decades after 1994, the everyday realities of young people are still laden with numerous obstacles that stifle youth navigation within their social worlds. Youth in the Western Cape specifically continue to struggle with schooling, employment and training, as has been illustrated through the analysis of data from Census 2011 in chapter two. In addition, young people in the province are negatively affected by endemic social challenges affecting the province such as crime, violence, substance abuse and social exclusion. Therefore, based on the empirical data in this report, this section will attempt to reveal the intermingling relationship between the emerging themes and thereby attempting to provide a deeper understanding of the realities of specific youth within the six research sites of this study.

### 9.1. School as a social field

The qualitative component of this study attempted to delve into the daily lives of specific youth within the six research sites. Youth narratives form the basis of this discussion as it tries to not solely emphasise the core issues that youth encounter daily. It attempts to provide a deeper description and understanding of the youth and the social contexts that they navigate within. Based on the findings of this research, the following core issues arose:

One of the research questions of this project was to explore how youth perceive themselves, their norms and circumstances. As school is one of the places where young people spend the majority of their time on a daily basis, participants shared greatly with regards to their experiences. Young people clearly stated that school and schooling was ridden with an array of challenges. As a result, youth in the sites stated that schools are not conducive for academic development for several reasons: Firstly, the participants described schools as violent spaces. They shared that the schools they attend are ridden with youth gangs for instance and as a result, learners are unable to focus solely on their academic obligations. Youth on youth violence was equally common as these young people utilised violence to create a level of safety for themselves in these spaces. The development of inappropriate relationships between educators and volunteers with scholars was shared as a challenge. It is clear that adult supervision for

these young people is almost non-existent and thereby further complicates and undermines the 'healthy' socialisation of youth.

Based on the youth narratives, it became apparent how the school, as a social field, and the experiences of youth did not function and exist apart from each other. Rather, the social challenges that exist within the area evidently permeate into the schools. For example, in areas where drugs and violence prevail, the school in the area will be at high risk of these social challenges infiltrating onto their premises. Therefore, it can be stated that the school and area are interdependent. In addition, the issues that exist in the area permeate into the schools and vice versa.

Similarly, the report highlights how schooling is significantly reliant on the socio-economic positions of the youth and their families. Young people's academic development and opportunities to complete schooling is contingent on the socio-economic conditions that surround the learner and their family. The socio-economic status of the young people's families appears to be particularly influential in the quality and lifespan of the youth's schooling. The young people, who were struggling to find employment typically revealed a similar situation for their parents or guardians. It can therefore be concluded that Intergenerational deprivation further reproduces the social positions of youth. In other words, the socio-economic status of the young people's parents or guardians, the lack of education and financial independence, continues to reproduce itself in the lives of the youth. Here, it is apparent how structural violence perpetuates itself in the everyday lives of the youth. The historically given socio-economic-political constraints of the families of these young people clearly limit the opportunities and agency of these young people. As a result, social mobility proves to be an even greater challenge for young people whose families are less privileged compared to the youth from affluent families. The concept of structural violence is particularly useful in this analysis as it highlights the historical framework that has traditionally influenced the lives of youth and that continues to do so for the present generation of youth.

Many youth participants explained how they attempted to respond to their socio-economic positions through finding part-time employment in an effort to financially support their families, attend to their own needs and avoid future unemployment. Attempting to find part time employment was one of the ways in which young people exercised their agency. This form of agency or proactive behaviour of these young people would be perceived as 'good' behaviour. However, in some cases, this form of individual agency influenced the youth's lives in

a less desirable manner. Young people became less focused on their schooling careers and eventually dropped out.

The quality of schooling was a major concern for youth. Many youth were ambivalent about schooling and its influences on future prospects for employment. In addition, the educational curriculums and physical school structures were questioned. The youth narratives revealed that young people were aware of the differences between schools within the previously classified 'race' groups. Through the comparisons made by the young people of the quality and physical conditions of different schools, these youth narratives continue to reflect how the historically adopted, structural challenges continue to translate and impact on young people's current situations and experiences. The youth perceptions therefore clearly supported the view that despite the discourse of change in Post-Apartheid South Africa, the socio-economic-political inequalities continue to echo in schools.

As a concluding remark, youth are not solely focussing on their academic responsibilities. Instead, many young people are burdened with what are perceived to be 'adult' responsibilities that include financial but social pressures. In addition, the daily lives of these youth include navigating within difficult and dangerous situations. As a result, young people's primary focus might not be on schooling. Instead, their schooling is interrelated with different social and - economic challenges. Interventions to improve young people's schooling and attempts at getting youth to complete their schooling should consider these challenges, alongside developing and implementing interventions in conjunction with the community and family.

## **9.2. Experiencing employment and skill development**

Many youth shared feelings of despondency and disempowerment in their quest to find employment. They stated that they were unaware of the employment and skills development opportunities available to them. Despite the negative perception of some youth regarding the benefit of schooling on their lives and employment prospects, the empirical data revealed that those who had completed their school careers were integrated easier into the job market compared to their counterparts, who had prematurely exited school. Despite having completed their schooling, many young people, who have or have not matriculated, felt that obtaining a matric certificate did not result in significant differences in job prospects for youth. Participants stated that young people who had matriculated were occupying low paying jobs such as packers in supermarkets or retail work. As a result, youth were doubtful of the importance of completing their schooling and its overall influence on the quality of their lives.

It was evident that the socio-economic status of youth played a vital role in young people attaining and maintaining employment. Participants expressed that for youth to apply for a job but maintain a job, young people needed some financial capital to participate in the job market. For instance, youth were unable to pay travelling costs to job interviews and printing of documents for their curriculum vitae. Similarly, such funding constraints influenced young people's participation in skills development programmes. For example, registration fees for training programmes were said to be equally unaffordable for many youth and therefore influenced their participation within such programmes.

Attaining and occupying long term, formal employment presented various challenges. The experience of short term or seasonal employment as referred to in the rural areas contributed greatly to the cycle of deprivation among young people and their families. The transitioning in and out of employment appears to keep young people within their existing social status, as short term employment does not allow for youth or their families to socially mobilise themselves. Additional factors that contribute to the youth's pessimistic outlook on employment include the requirements attached to vacancies and the low paying jobs and long hours of work that do not improve the living conditions of individuals. In addition, perceived racism in the employment sector and corruption creates a negative outlook on youth's involvement in employment opportunities. Volunteering to gain experience in the workplace is not considered an option, according to the youth. The majority of the young people's social positions, especially NEETS, does not allow for this. Participants expressed that they needed to earn money as many of them occupy active roles in financially contributing to their families. In this case, it becomes clear how youth perceive themselves as well as their roles within their families. As a result, it is apparent how these youth are making informed decisions to impress upon their worlds.

Xenophobic and racist views amongst youth existed. Youth living in the Western Cape stated that foreign African youth were competing for employment in the province. A similar perception however existed among the local youth from diverse ethnic groups. Based on the narratives, extensive competition between youth from different geographical spaces and ethnic groupings existed. Youth, especially those living in and closer to the city, expressed that young people from other parts of Africa and rural areas were more willing to be 'used' (exploited) to work longer hours and for less pay. These distinctions made by participants between different youth were rather clear.

Youth claimed to possess various informal skills that includes carpentry, ability to repair computers, welding and panel beating to name a few. Few participants, especially those

struggling to enter the job market attempted to utilize their informal skills through creating their own businesses. Despite young people's initiative, this particular form of agency did not always bring about successful results. Many of these young entrepreneurs reported that they failed due to a lack of capital to sustain their businesses. It was therefore clear that youth who lacked formalized education and training were further marginalized in their employment ventures and social spaces. Here, it becomes more apparent how the structural factors influence the agency of youth and vice versa. In other words, the forms of agency that are practiced by young people, especially NEETS, are constrained due to the structural influences that youth have to function and navigate within.

Finally, the data revealed that skills development training primarily, is unable to transform the socio-economic positions of youth. It appears as though young people require assistance throughout the process of developing their skills. For example, young people require logistical and financial support to attend training programmes. In addition, youth have expressed a need for support before, during and after attending a training programme. Young people need support in how to access employment opportunities and similarly skills development or training programmes; as well as support in where to find job and training advertisements. The youth participants expressed needing support post training in how to utilize the skills that they have now acquired. Finally, the quality of the training programmes was questioned. Youth shared that they are not enthusiastic to attend programmes that were not accredited. In the view of youth participants, the training that is offered to them, such as developing curriculum vitae, has minimal transformational qualities, as improvement to their everyday reality is minimal. Skills development, according to the young people, did not create much change in their everyday lives.

### **9.3. Youth agency**

The youth narratives were able to provide a deeper look into the lives of the young people from the six different research sites. Discussions with these youth provided insight into the thinking and actions of the young people in their day-to-day activities, especially those of NEETS. Therefore, a deeper understanding of how young people make sense of their lives and construct and exercise diverse pathways for themselves within the specific contexts and situations, was developed. Youth shared the different ways and forms of agency, through which they engage with the social-economic-political and physical worlds that they navigate within. Based on this report, youth agency was expressed through young people finding jobs to support their families and themselves as well as, creating safer spaces in their areas by cutting down trees on a field

that was perceived to be an unsafe space for them. These were some of the examples of how youth navigated in their specific contexts. These youth actions can be considered as 'positive' agency, or actions that bring about positive behaviour and interaction.

However, less desirable forms of agency were identified through interaction with youth participants. Another constructed pathway that young people have created in these areas is gang affiliation. Many of the young males, who participated in this project, were affiliated to a particular gang. The reason why this report will focus on this particular form of youth agency is not to further marginalise these youth. Instead, this report wants to highlight some of the behaviour that is considered to be 'deviant' and 'problematic' for individuals outside of these behaviours. It is important to highlight such youth behaviour as the research sites that were visited are confronted with challenges including gangs, crime and drugs on a daily basis. Therefore, this section of the report wants to focus on the less socially desirable actions of youth as well as attempt to delve beyond the criminological understandings of such deviant behaviour of youth and instead, explore the social nature of these youth gangs and its complexities. This section of the report therefore hopes to shift the framework in which youth gangs are understood and that youth respond to. Analysing the empirical data revealed that youth gangs are far more complex than just 'the oversimplified gangster'.

Generally, gang affiliation, like various other forms of deviant behaviour is understood and responded to as individualised behaviour; a form of 'negative agency' meaning human actions that are 'bad', to put simply. However, as in this project, data revealed that gang affiliation is not solely individualised behaviour. Instead, through the narratives, it became apparent how historical influences and structural factors reproduced itself in the lives of the youth today. These different forms of youth agency expressed by young people should therefore be understood within particular social contexts. Young people will act differently in the different contexts that they find themselves in. To take it a step further, even as a gang member, young people behave in a particular way based on their understandings of their situation and context. The fluidity of gang identity is an example of how young people shift their actions as they perceive as needed. As mentioned in chapter 5, it becomes clear how gang affiliation is heightened or played down in specific contexts and time. When a gang member perceives a certain situation to be a threat to his safety, he will publically display or he will heighten his gang "performativity". Then, when he feels less threatened, the need to perform his gang identity will be less needed. Gang performativity is therefore, understood to be beneficial by the actor.

Gang affiliation furthermore reveals young people's responses to and engagement with their deprived contexts. Through their affiliation, these young males experienced a degree of social inclusion, sense of belonging, respect, financial income and safety in unsafe spaces. Affiliation to gangs clearly provided youth with varying forms of social and economic capital. Therefore, it can be concluded that creating employment opportunities solely will not prevent marginalised youth from participation in gangs. As gangs provide psychological, social and economic opportunities for youth, a multidimensional response to gangsterism is required. For example, understandings of masculinity played a significant role in young males' reasoning to join a gang. Therefore, interventions to gang affiliation should address the various levels that encompass gang affiliation such as structural challenges as well as individual factors.

Finally, the majority of youth who participated in the study, including those affiliated to gangs and struggling with substance abuse, shared their continuous attempts at improving their living conditions and working towards more socially acceptable lifestyles. These attempts however, were consistently faced with a range of social and financial challenges. Youth, especially those who are involved in less appropriate social behaviour for instance, constantly moved in and out of socially acceptable and less acceptable lives. It was clear that specific youth are more susceptible to reverting back to socially less desirable lives such as NEETS. Yet, despite the struggles that youth experienced on a daily basis, participating in a particular belief system and sometimes having a child seemed to be far more successful in creating long term exits from less desirable behaviour. A concluding remark in relation to youth agency, specifically deviant youth action, is that it would be useful to explore the meanings that young people attach to their actions within specific contexts. It would be useful to deconstruct the frameworks in which youth agency; particularly negative youth agency is situated within as it would allow for the exploration of different interventions. Relating to youth gangs for instance, it would be more beneficial if understandings of gang affiliation extended from limited criminal explanations and attempted to explore the deeper social nature of less socially accepted behaviour.

#### **9.4. Youth, social services and positive influences**

Youth reported limited engagements with social services as well as a lack of support available to them. Participants shared that they experienced difficulties in accessing social services. Yet, despite the mentioned challenges that youth experience, formal and informal influences that contribute positively to the lives of youth do exist.

At an individual level, it was found that psychological factors such as having a positive mind set promoted resilience in some youth. Such mind sets were established through individuals constructing a sense of purpose, being generous within their surroundings and having empathy for others. Individuals that possessed these qualities appeared to be more resilient in their challenging contexts but were considered to be the role models in the communities. Individuals seemed to be more socially engaged when displaying such traits.

Participation within religious belief systems proved to be significant in the lives of some youth. It was evident that youth who engaged within a faith based framework, experienced and responded differently from those who did not engage within such an understanding. Resilient families appeared to provide greater support for their children. The empirical data revealed that even when children from resilient families fall prey to specific societal pressures, such as substance abuse, most of these youth were eventually able to rise above the pressures. Becoming a parent shifted the behaviour of some youth. In some instances, having a child positively influenced young people's behaviour.

Formal structures played a positive role in the daily lives of youth. However, it was clear from one of the examples of a treatment centre that the effectiveness of an intervention was highly dependent on and influenced by the level of commitment and co-operation of a young person. This example emphasised that despite the daily challenges experienced within state clinics, positive outcomes can be reached for those seeking assistance if these individuals accept responsibility and practice individual agency in their overall well-being. In addition, NGO's have similarly shown to play a vital role in the daily lives of youth. Locally situated NGO's seem to possess deeper understandings of the youth and the social worlds that these young people navigate within. Furthermore, youth experienced the DSD internships to be a positive influence in their lives, as it provided young people with opportunities, work experience and financial capital. These factors appear to have impacted on young people's self-worth and confidence.

Despite these positive experiences of services, some challenges were identified in the services and support available for youth. Young people shared various suggestions for the obstacles experienced. Awareness for the services and support had to be improved. In addition, the geographical distribution of services had to be evaluated and addressed. Participants felt that the services were unequally distributed. Data revealed that some youth felt excluded, specifically those who lived outside of the Metropole. In conclusion, participants stated that

services needed great improvement specifically that social services and programmes needed to be more consistent and sustainable.

## 9.5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations that could promote positive developmental outcomes for youth in the province are made:

### 1. *Creating safer spaces for young people*

Due to the high levels of violence and crime that youth are exposed to, focussed attention should be directed at creating safety for youth in the Western Cape. Such interventions should be implemented simultaneously on multiple levels that are inclusive of the schools, homes and communities within which young people navigate. It is of great importance to implement such interventions concurrently on different levels, due to the interdependent relationship between the different spheres and its surrounding communities

Strategies aimed at violence reduction should include both short term interventions, to deal with crisis situations having an immediate and direct impact on learner performance; as well as long term interventions aimed at the entrenched nature of violence in the province, in particular areas where schooling is disrupted due to gang related violence. In developing these interventions, the effectiveness of current attempts to create safety at schools should be evaluated. For instance, physically enclosing schools such as the case study presented within the report has been reported by learners as not being conducive for learning. Rather, such interventions entrap learners and educators in violent spaces that further complicates their daily functioning.

### 2. *Improving the physical infrastructure of schools*

As reported by youth participants in the six research sites, youth stated that their schools lacked various resources and facilities. It is therefore recommended that the infrastructure at schools be improved in the different research sites and areas in the province that have similar characteristics. However, attempts to refurbish schools and improve the facilities for learners should include youth, educators, parents and other community members. This approach might create a sense of pride within individuals and possibly contribute to building social cohesion.

### 3. *Training and support for educators*

Based on the youth narratives, learners and educators are confronted with numerous social challenges on a daily basis. These difficulties include gangsterism, crime, substance abuse and learners coming from difficult social situations, to name a few; all of which contributes significantly to the underperformance of learners, as well as, school dropout. The need for educators to expand their roles as mere academic teachers is critical. In other words, due to the various social challenges that teachers are confronted with on a daily basis, it would be useful for teachers to be able to better identify and possibly attend to the different challenges experienced at school. However, educators are not necessarily trained and equipped to provide such support. Therefore, different forms of training such as conflict management, dealing with youth and cultural sensitivity for educators could be useful. In addition, extensive support for educators should be provided.

### 4. *Financial support to maintain schooling*

The report indicated that, according to the youth participants, financial constraints of parents influenced young people's school careers. Young people drop out of school as a result of their parents' inability to not only pay school fees but more importantly, to provide in the ongoing needs of learners. In this case, to prevent young people from dropping out of school, existing interventions, aimed at the waiving of school fees should be expanded to providing extended support, specifically financial, to learners throughout their schooling trajectory to upkeep their attendance and eventually, their graduation from school. In addition, other supportive measures such as providing nutritious meals on school premises should be expanded where needed.

### 5. *Accredited bridging courses for school drop-outs*

School drop-outs reported that they were struggling to enter the job market. Based on this finding, it is recommended that programmes that better equip such young people to further and complete their schooling, be developed. It might be useful to provide school drop-outs with various pathways, in addition to ABET, to provide them with certificated training. In this way, various avenues could be available to youth to explore if they had dropped out of school and want to enter the workforce.

### 6. *Improving youth awareness of available employment*

Creating a 'central point' frequented by young people may be used to advertise employment opportunities. This recommendation is different from 'youth cafes' as these central points do not need to be physical spaces assigned to house computers for instance. Rather, such central points for advertising opportunities can be as simple as providing a notice board in different parts of an area. These 'central points' do not have to be presented too formally. Instead, these points can

blended within spaces that the youth frequent; even in spaces considered to be less desirable such as game shops and street corners. Identifying spaces that youth already utilise will be more useful than trying to attract them to a newly created space. In addition, the use of the media, cell phones and internet can be increased in creating youth awareness of the job opportunities that are available to them. These interventions however have to be marketed extensively in the areas.

The creation of employment agencies for less privileged young people should be considered. Such agencies can assist youth searching for permanent as well as temporary employment. In addition, schools can assist learners, who are looking for part time employment in writing up their curriculum vitae as well as the on line searching for part time jobs.

#### *7. 'Upscaling' the quality of jobs and training*

The report indicates that young people are dissatisfied with the quality of jobs that are available to them. Youth expressed that they are struggling to cope with the low paying jobs that are offered to them. According to the youth, such low paying jobs do not substantially improve their quality of life. Therefore, it is recommended that NEETS in particular are provided with opportunities to formalise their existing 'raw' skills. In other words, providing but creating skilled paths for NEETS will be beneficial. Various support structures for youth could be implemented. For example, it might be useful to explore travelling or public transport rebates for youth, as it will allow for youth to travel to their destinations when wanting to find employment, as when having to attend work and school. Such an intervention would decrease the financial pressure for young people, who being stifled as a result of their financial status. Permanent employment opportunities are needed or training and support for your to start up their own businesses; as temporary employment does not improve the lives of young people much.

Similarly, the quality of training should be improved. Youth are interested in attending accredited training that increases their marketability within the workforce. It is recommended that young people be provided with support post-training sessions. In other words, when youth are provided with the opportunity to undergo training, further support such as how to use the skills, where best to utilise such skills and more refined and refresher courses can be provided. Longer training sessions are needed too.

#### *8. Defining the roles of adults*

An attempt at improving the roles of adults within the lives of young people is crucial. It is clear in the report that many adults that interact with youth function outside of the expected roles and positions of an adult. A more rigorous process when employing adults to work on schools for

instance should be motivated. The process of employing adult volunteers should be far demanding and their training, more extensive. The training could possibly include communication skills, understanding of cultures, norms and standards, conflict management, first aid, cultural sensitivity, to name a few.

#### *9. Adult support in communities*

It might be a useful to identify adults, families or homes that can provide trustworthy, 'healthy' assistance to young people in areas that they live in, when needed. It is clear in the report that young people already gravitate towards such persons or families within the areas. However, a network of possible mentors for the youth can be developed in the different areas.

#### *10. Building resilient families*

Families appear to need social, emotional and financial support. Interventions should include programmes that teach families how to empower themselves. As many families of NEETS are clearly struggling socially and financially, it would be useful to assist such families with employment opportunities for parents and parenting skills training. In addition, parenting programmes for young adults is necessary. However, these family programmes should be context specific. Workshops aimed at improving relationships between young people and their families could be useful.

#### *11. Encouraging youth to start-up businesses*

Another recommendation is that youth should be encouraged and assisted to start up their businesses. Various support structures to assist youth in terms of training as well as financial assistance would be useful for young people wanting to start their own businesses. Becoming financially independent can be encouraged through youth developing their own vegetable gardens and to trade in their communities. It would be useful to explore why certain youth attempt entrepreneurship while others do not.

#### *12. Increasing opportunity for work experience*

It might be deemed useful in providing learners an opportunity to gain experience within the workforce. Learners should be exposed to various employment opportunities to gain experience. However, such opportunities should be limited to school vacations possibly, thereby not impacting on schooling. Similarly, older youth should expose themselves to such experiences in order to obtain work experience. The 'centre points' suggested earlier in this section, could provide young people with the vacancies for such participation.

Some youth attempt to obtain experience through voluntary work; however, many youth are unable to participate in voluntary work without any form of payment. Therefore, it could be suggested that volunteers at least be provided with a stipend where possible. This will allow for young people to gain experience and to financially support themselves whilst gaining experience.

### *13. Re-socialise gangs and group behaviour*

Conducting workshops, in the spaces that these young individuals occupy, on topics such as masculinity, fatherhood and conflict resolution might be useful for young men who are affiliated to gangs. Encouraging skills development and providing employment opportunities to such groups might be useful. In addition, extensive attempts at integrating these youth into the community and their families can be beneficial. As many of these young people expressed possessing specific skills, it would be suggested that these young males should not be further marginalised but be presented with similar opportunities as non-gang members to empower themselves.

For the very young children affiliated to gangs, the recommendations include: providing specific programmes not only with ex-gang members but older gangsters, who want to exit the criminal lifestyle. Leadership camps and mentorships for these young children might be useful in providing them with alternative ways to navigate in their daily lives. Peer mentoring would be encouraging for young members. Similarly, affiliation with various faith-based organisations would provide opportunities for these young individuals to participate within various activities in their communities.

### *14. Recognising and empowering positive community members*

It might be beneficial to identify positive and supportive individuals or groups within different social spaces in which youth interact on a daily basis. This recommendation puts forward that positive individuals are recognised in the different areas in an attempt to highlight the positive contributions in the community as well. In addition, the state could possibly scout such individuals or organisations which appear to be making positive strides within the communities and support them in various ways such as funding, etc. Youth have already reported being aware of such individuals in their areas. But this suggestion would somewhat 'formalise' these individuals or groups of positive contributors who work with and alongside youth.

## Annexure 1: Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WESTERN CAPE YOUTH SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS 2013

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) For each question, please fill in the answer, or circle the number next to the answer that is applicable.
- 2) For most questions, only one answer needs to be circled, unless stated otherwise.
- 3) If you have any questions, or if you are unsure about something, please feel free to ask one of the coordinators for help.

### 1) DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

#### 1. What was your age at your last birthday?

.....	years old
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#### 2. Which language do you speak most often in your household?

1) Afrikaans	4) IsiZulu	7) Sesotho	10) Tshivenda
2) IsiXhosa	5) IsiNdebele	8) Setswana	11) Xitsonga
3) English	6) Sepedi	9) SiSwati	12) Other, please specify: .....

#### 3. What is your gender?

1) Male
2) Female
3) Transgender

#### 4. How would you describe yourself in terms of your population group?

1) Black African
2) Coloured
3) Indian or Asian
4) White
5) Other, please specify: .....

#### 5. Have you been, or are you currently married or living with a partner?

1) Never married
2) Married
3) Living together like married partners
4) Widow/Widower
5) Divorced
6) Separated (not divorced)
7) Other, please specify: .....

### 2) DWELLING CHARACTERISTICS

#### 1. What type of material are the outside walls of your house MAINLY constructed off?

1) Brick/concrete
2) Corrugated iron, zinc or asbestos sheets
3) Wood
4) Other, please specify: .....

<b>2. How many rooms does your house have? Count ALL rooms, including bathrooms, kitchens, outside rooms, garages etc.</b>		<b>3. Do you have electricity at your house?</b>
.....	rooms	1) Yes 2) No

<b>4. Does your house have access to a toilet?</b>	<b>5. In which way does your household obtain water for domestic use?</b>
1) Yes, inside the house or yard 2) Yes, communal toilet (not on your plot, shared with other households) 3) No access toilet facilities	1) Piped water inside the house or yard 2) Piped water outside the yard 3) Other, please specify: .....

### 3) HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

<b>1. How many people, including yourself, is part of your household?</b>	
<b>PLEASE NOTE: Household members are seen as everyone who occasionally lives at your home <u>AND</u> is dependent on the household and/or makes contributions to your household</b>	
.....	household members

<b>2. To what degree are you involved in large decisions in your household?</b>
1) Not involved 2) Involved in <u>some</u> decisions 3) Involved in <u>most</u> decisions 4) Involved in <u>all</u> decisions

<b>3. Which of the following does your household have? Please circle <u>ALL</u> the options that are applicable.</b>	
1) Hot running water	12) Home telephone landline (excluding cellphone)
2) Built-in kitchen sink	13) Computer – desktop or laptop
3) A <u>flush</u> toilet in the house or yard	14) TV set
4) Electric stove	15) Pay TV subscription (e.g. M-net/DSTV/Top TV)
5) Microwave oven	16) DVD player/Blu Ray Player
6) Any type of refrigerator	17) Home theatre system
7) Free standing deep freezer	18) Motor vehicle
8) Tumble dryer	19) Swimming pool
9) Washing machine	20) Air conditioner (excluding fans)
10) Dishwashing machine	21) Home security system (alarm)
11) Vacuum cleaner	22) Live-in or part time domestic worker(s)

<b>4. Do you live in a house, cluster house or town house that is made of concrete or brick?</b>
1) Yes 2) No

<b>5. Please indicate <u>HOW MANY</u> of each of the following items do you have in your household?</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Number of item</b>
Radio sets (including hi-fi's)	.....

Cellphone(s)	.....
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#### 4) EDUCATION

<b>1. Do you presently attend an educational institution (e.g. school, college, ABET)?</b>	<b>2. Which of the following educational institutions do you presently attend?</b>
1) Yes 2) No <b>(skip to D.3)</b>	1) Ordinary school (Grade 1-12 learners) 2) Special School 3) FET college (Further Education and Training) 4) Other College 5) University (Higher Educational Institution) 6) Adult Basic Education and Training Centre (ABET) 7) Literacy classes 8) Home based education/home schooling

<b>3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?</b>	
0) No schooling 1) Grade R 2) Grade 1 3) Grade 2 4) Grade 3 / ABET 1 / Kha Ri Gude / SANLI 5) Grade 4 / 6) Grade 5 / ABET 2 7) Grade 6 8) Grade 7 / ABET 3 9) Grade 8 / Form 1	10) Grade 9 / Form 2 / ABET 4 11) Grade 10 / Form 3 12) Grade 11 / Form 4 13) Grade 12 / Form 5 14) Certificate/Diploma with less than Grade 12 15) Certificate/Diploma with Grade 12 16) Bachelor's Degree 17) Honours Degree 18) Masters/PhD 19) Other specify .....

#### 5) EMPLOYMENT

<b>1. In the past 7 days, did you work, or do business for any form of payment (including domestic work)?</b>	<b>2. In the previous four weeks, were you looking for any kind of job, or trying to start any kind of business?</b>
1) Yes <b>(Go to FINISH)</b> 2) No	1) Yes <b>(Go to FINISH)</b> 2) No

<b>3. What was your main reason for not trying to find work, or starting a business in the last 4 weeks?</b>
.....
.....
.....

#### FINISH

**Thank you for your participation!  
Please hand the questionnaire to the closest coordinator**

**SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY COORDINATOR**

<b>Coordinator Name</b>		<b>Date</b>	d	d	m	m	y	y
							1	3

<b>Regional District</b>	<b>Main Place</b>
6) Cape Metropole	1) Delft
7) Winelands	2) Mitchells Plain
8) West Coast	3) Philippi
	4) Paarl
	5) De Doorns
	6) Saldanha

<b>Interview Code</b>
1) Questionnaire completed by respondent
2) Questionnaire completed by fieldworker
3) Respondent refuses to participate
4) Other, specify:

## Annexure 2: Semi structured interview schedule for youth participants

### 1. Before the interview commences

The researcher introduces him or herself. The study will then be described and all the 'conditions' of the research will be explained to the participant. Once this has been done, the participant will be given the opportunity to ask questions for clarity. Finally, the consent form will be signed by the participant and researcher.

### 2. Tell me about yourself

- What can you tell me about yourself?
- What do you like most about yourself? Tell me why.
- Tell me a bit about your family.
- What type of relationship do you have with family members?
- What do you like about your family?
- What are some of the challenges your family experiences?
- Do you feel that your family supports you? Give an example.

### 3. Community

- Describe the area that you live in.
- What do you like about the area you stay in?
- Tell me about some of the challenges in your area?
- How can these challenges be dealt with?
- Do you feel that you (and the youth) can make changes in the area? Motivate.
- Who is a role model for you? Motivate.

### 4. Peers

- Do you have a best friend?
- What makes that person your best friend?
- What kind of things do you two do over weekends?
- Do your friends attend school/ work?
- What kind of things do you do in the week?
- Do your friends ever pressure you to do things that are not good for you? Discuss.

### 5. Education and training

- Do you attend school/ college/ university?
- What grade/ level are you in?
- Tell me about the school that you attend.
- What do you enjoy most about your school?
- What do you dislike most about your school?
- Have you attended any type of skills training? Discuss.
- Did this training assist you?
- If yes, how? If no, what needs to change to improve the training?
- Are there any other skills that you would like to learn?
- What type of training/ skills do you think would be useful for youth in your area to learn?
- How can we better attract youth to attend skills training?
- Do you think that such skills will increase the youth's chances of getting a job?
- Additional questions for school drop outs:
- Why did you drop out?
- When you dropped out, what were your plans?

- Did you do what you had planned? Discuss.
- Did you attend any training programmes?
- If yes, what programmes? If no, why not?
- What type of training/ skills would you like to learn?
- How do you feel about your decision now?
- What are your plans now?

## **6. Employment**

- Are you working?
- If yes, how long were you trying to get a job?
- Where do you work?
- Is this a permanent or temporary job?
- How did you get this job?
- Do you enjoy your job? Motivate.
- What do you wish you could change about your job?
- Who else in your family works?
- Are there any opportunities for work in your area?
- Who do you have to support financially with your salary?
- Would you like to learn any other skills? Discuss.
- If no, are you looking for a job?
- How can you be helped to find a job?
- What type of training do you need?
- What type of training would you like?
- What type of job would you like one day? Motivate.
- Do you think that you will eventually get that job?

## **7. Youth groups (church, sports, etc.)**

- Do you know of any youth groups that have/ are happening in your community?
- Did you attend any of these groups?
- Tell me about these programmes.
- What type of youth groups will be useful in your area?
- Would youth attend such groups? Discuss.
- What other youth groups would you like to see in your area?
- How can more youth be attracted to such groups?

## **8. Closing questions**

- Do you think that you have the power to make changes in your own life? Discuss.
- Do you think that you have the power to make changes in your community? Discuss.
- What type of changes do you feel you can make?
- Describe to me what your future looks like.

## Annexure 3: Semi structured interview schedule for professionals

### 1. Introductory questions

- Indicate which area the professional is working in.
- What is your job title?
- What role do you play in relation to youth?
- What type of work do you do with youth in this area?
- What type of training do you have?

### 2. Trends

- What youth related issues do you have to deal with in this area?
- What are the factors contributing to these issues?
- What are some of the positive trends amongst youth that you see in this area?
- What are some of the challenges when working with youth in this area?
- How do you respond to these challenges?
- What are the newer trends?
- What are the changes you see happening amongst youth?

### 3. Education and training

- What can we do to get youth to enjoy school more?
- What are the positive things happening at schools?
- What are some of the challenges youth have at schools?
- What support is there to assist youth during these challenges?
- How do youth respond to these challenges?
- Why do you think youth are dropping out of school?
- What should be done to keep youth in schools?
- There are many school-drop outs in this area. What happens with them?
- What type of training do you think youth can benefit from in this area?
- Why do you think some youth are not being trained?
- How can we better attract these youth to join different skills development training?

### 4. Unemployment

- Why are so many of the youth unemployed?
- Are there jobs for youth in this area?
- How can we better prepare youth for employment?
- If yes, do the youth in this area have the skills and qualifications for the jobs?
- If no, what are the unemployed youth doing during the day?
- What are some of the ways that we can get these youth employed?
- 

### 5. Intervention

- What services do you think youth can benefit from in this area?
- What services have been provided but were unsuccessful? Elaborate.
- What successful services were provided? Motivate.
- How can existing services, for the youth, be improved?
- What can youth do, for themselves, to improve their own situations?

## Annexure 4: Semi structured interview schedule for focus group discussions

### 1. Introductory questions

- What is it like being a young person in this area?
- What are the positive things about being young in this area??
- Who are role models in your community?
- What makes this person a role model?

### 2. Education and training

- What are some of the reasons youth enjoy attending school?
- What factors keep youth in school?
- Mention some challenges that can make it difficult for youth to attend school.
- Why do you think youth decide to drop out of school?
- What usually happens to youth who drop out of school?
- Tell me why some youth still manage to attend school even in such challenges?
- What changes need to happen so that youth will remain in school?
- What type of support do youth need to continue schooling?
- What type of training do you think will be useful for youth in your area?
- Do youth attend skills training? Discuss.
- Why do you think some youth do not get involved in skills training?
- What can be done to get youth to go for skills training?

### 3. Employment

- What jobs are available for youth in the area?
- What type of jobs do youth have in your area?
- What type of jobs would youth like to have?
- Do youth have skills/ training for jobs?
- What type of training/ skills do youth have in this area?
- How can we attract youth to
- What would be some of the reasons why youth do not develop skills?
- What are the positive things about being employed?
- What are the challenges when working?
- What are some of the reasons why youth do not work?
- How do unemployed youth support themselves financially?
- What do unemployed youth do during the day?
- What should we do to get the unemployed youth working?
- What type of support do youth need to remain employed?
- Why do some youth succeed in getting a job and others do not?

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