

# Youth in Cape Town: The need to implement a multi-sectoral approach to support youth development

November 2016

More than twenty years after the country's transition to democracy, over half of all young South Africans (aged 15-24) still live in income poverty, and racial, class and gender inequalities continue to limit their choices and chances for upward social mobility. School drop-out levels are high, access to higher education limited and employment rates among youth remain low.<sup>1</sup> This situation is no different for young people living in Cape Town.

As a local government, the City of Cape Town (hereinafter 'the City') is "committed to the development of its youth, and recognises the important part they play in society".<sup>2</sup> The City's Youth Development Policy points to the challenges that young people in the city face "on a daily basis" and recognises that youth development cannot happen in "silos and vacuums".<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Transversal Youth Development Strategy sets out the City's strategic vision to improve the coordination of youth programmes and provide "Integrated Services, Opportunities and Support (SOS) for young people of Cape Town".<sup>4</sup>

This policy brief presents a set of indicators based on ward-level analysis of 2011 Census data and a range of administrative data that can help inform the implementation of these policies relating to youth development. It draws on a multidimensional poverty index to highlight the many and complex challenges facing young people in Cape Town. The findings suggest the need to strengthen a number of cross-cutting approaches in the City's Youth Development Policy, the Transversal Youth Development Strategy and its Integrated Development Plan.<sup>5</sup> They also point at specific action that can be taken by individual line departments.

This brief complements the interactive *Western Cape Youth Explorer* (hereinafter 'the Youth Explorer'), which provides a range of ward-level indicators across the Western Cape, including the Cape Metro. For more details see <http://youthexplorer.org.za>

## Youth face difficulties in multiple areas of life

In Cape Town, more than four out of ten young people (42%) aged 15-24 live in households with a per capita monthly income of less than R779 [the "upper bound poverty line"<sup>6</sup>], compared to 31% of the adult population.<sup>7</sup> **Income poverty** continues to be strongly associated with race: 58% of African youth and 37% of Coloured youth live below the poverty line, compared to just over 3% of White young people.<sup>8</sup>

Many young people experience **multiple forms of deprivation** simultaneously, including low levels of education, poor health and limited access to housing, basic services and economic opportunities.<sup>9</sup> These vulnerabilities are often inter-related: for example, income poverty can compromise children's health, which, in turn, impacts on education and employment prospects.

The Youth MPI is an index designed to capture the multiple deprivations experienced by young people.<sup>10</sup> It comprises 11 indicators in the dimensions of education, health, living environment and economic opportunities. Analyses of the 2011 Census data indicate that overall 23% of the youth population (aged 15-24) in Cape Town is multidimensionally poor.<sup>11</sup> However, there are **stark differences across wards**.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 1, drawn from the Youth Explorer, highlights the spatial inequalities that persist within the youth cohort: it depicts multidimensional poverty rates that range from under 10% in suburban wards (wards shaded light pink) to over 40% in parts of the south-eastern and northern periphery of the city (wards shaded dark red).

Furthermore, a breakdown of the Youth MPI (see figure 2) shows that educational attainment (45%) and not being in any kind of education, employment or training (NEET) (20%) are the two largest contributors to multidimensional youth poverty in the metropolitan area.<sup>13</sup> This indicates the urgency to intervene in ways that would improve young people's **educational outcomes** and **connections to the labour market**.

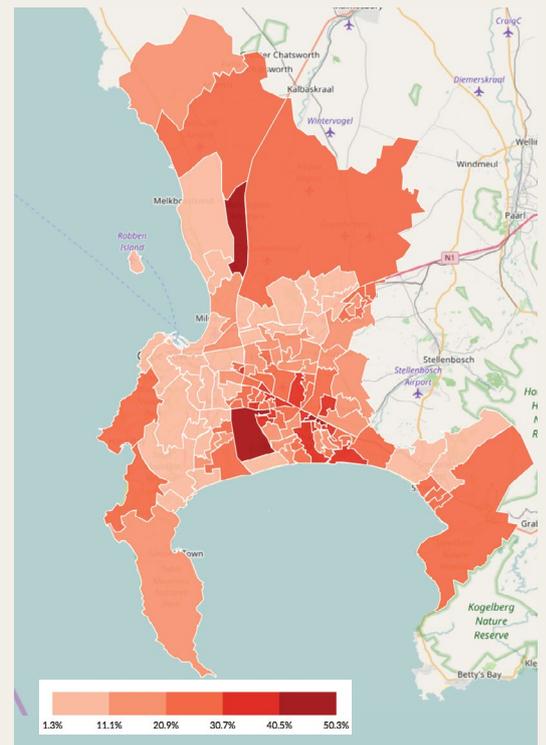


Figure 1: Incidence of multidimensional youth poverty by ward

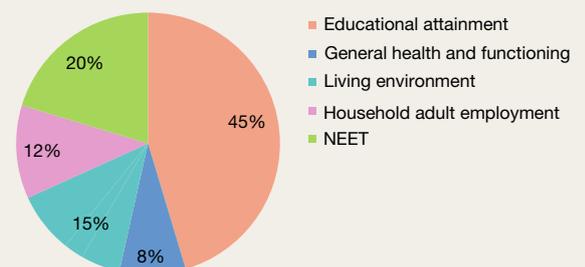


Figure 2: Contribution of indicators to the Youth MPI

# Key challenges and opportunities for intervention

Understanding the multiple dimensions of poverty and how they interact is crucial for developing **comprehensive, transversal policies** that can support today's youth as they strive to break the vicious cycles of poverty. Various line departments may, however, remain interested in certain key indicators for their specific area of work. This section therefore provides an overview of those key indicators and points at possibilities for interventions in each area.<sup>14</sup>

## Schools

Nationally, access to education has improved significantly in the post-apartheid period, but this has not resulted in increased employment. The poor quality of education offered in the majority of public schools acts as a poverty trap. Poorer children in those schools very quickly fall behind in their learning, and learning backlogs and grade repetition remain key drivers of school drop-out at a later age.<sup>15</sup> This is also true in Cape Town: of the approximately 52 000 learners who were enrolled in grade 8 in 2011, 74% made it to Matric in 2015, 62% passed and 31% qualified for university entrance.

The Youth Explorer data further indicate that in Cape Town:

- Overall, about 78% of youth aged 16-17 have completed grade 9 or higher. However, there are certain areas in the Metro where less than 70% reach this level (see figure 3).
- Many young people struggle to finish secondary schooling, with only 51% of Cape Town youth aged 20-24 having completed their matric or matric equivalent.

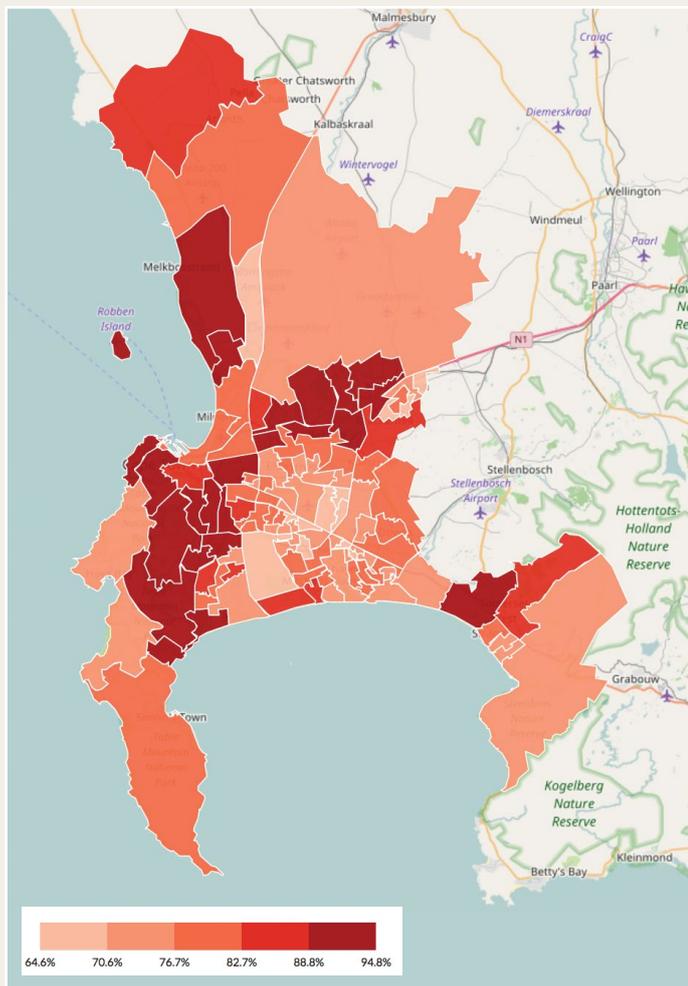


Figure 3: Youth aged 16-17 who have completed grade 9 by ward

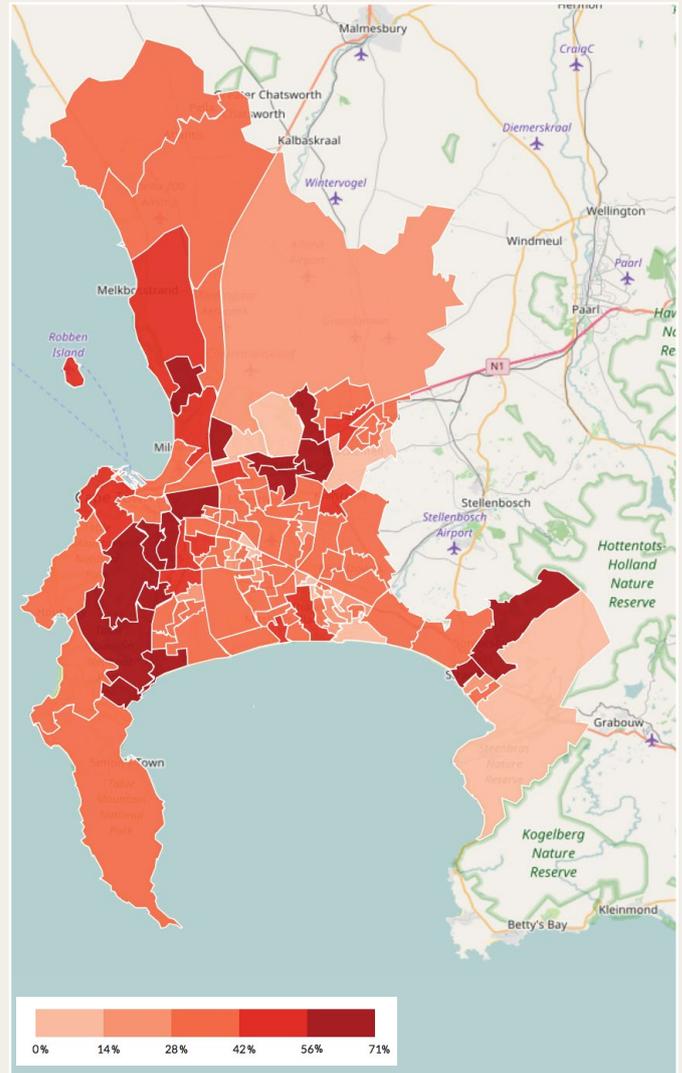


Figure 4: Average mean score in both language and mathematics Grade 9 systemic tests by ward

- Major learning deficits are *already* substantial by the time learners reach grade 9. The 2015 Grade 9 Systemic Test scores show that only 22% of learners passed the mathematics test, with an average mark of 34% and only 53% of learner passed the language test, with an average mark of 52%.
- Mapping these results at ward level shows the extreme disparities in outcomes between learners attending school in affluent areas versus those attending schools in townships or informal settlements.

It is therefore imperative to:

- **Improve the quality of teaching and learning for all.** The greatest efforts are required in poorer areas, starting in the foundation phase or earlier, before learning deficits have grown to the levels currently shown in grade 9.
- Find ways to **remediate the current learning backlog** among high-school learners who attend schools in less affluent areas, so that the current cohort of young people are supported to write and pass their matric exam and find access to higher education.

## Post-school education

A college or university qualification increases young people's employment chances and earning potential; yet only 14% of Cape Town youth aged 18 – 24 attend college or university.<sup>16</sup> Many high school students don't have access to the information they need to make informed decisions about matric subjects or later career paths. Pathways to post-school education and employment are often unclear.<sup>17</sup> Each college and university has its own application requirements, making it difficult and costly for students to apply to more than one institution. In addition, tuition costs are high – in the range of R24,000 for college,<sup>18</sup> and as high as R65,000 for first-year studies at university<sup>19</sup>. Those who do manage to secure a place in an institution of higher learning are faced with a range of expenses and an institutional culture that may push them back out of the system. Drop-out rates in Western Cape colleges are especially high. About three out of five students who register for the National Certificate (Vocational) examinations actually write and only 55% of them end up passing.<sup>20</sup>

These challenges highlight the need to:

- Provide clear and comprehensive **career guidance** early in high school to guide subject choices and highlight post-school learning pathways.
- Provide **widely accessible, clear and efficient information, guidance and support** to make it easier for students to apply to colleges and universities.
- Provide **comprehensive support** – including financial aid, academic and psychosocial support – and an inclusive institutional culture to enable students to stay the course until graduation.
- Invest substantially in the college sector to **expand access to, and improve completion rates in technical and vocational education and training**; strengthen links between colleges and employers to ensure education and training lead to actual employment.

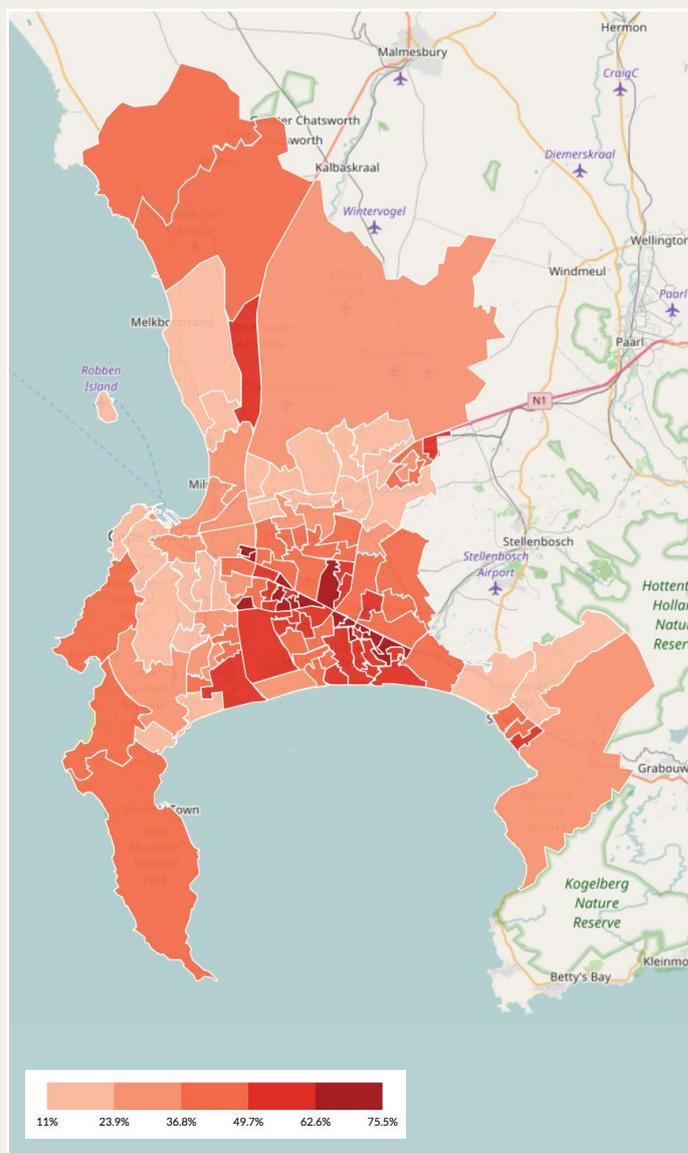


Figure 5: Youth unemployment rate by ward

## Health and wellness

Improving the health of adolescents and youth is crucial for their current well-being and future economic productivity, as adolescent behaviours and health are key predictors of the *adult* burden of disease. Poverty is associated with experiences of social exclusion, heightened stress, violence and trauma which may increase risk and severity of mental illness and substance misuse, and compromise access to care.<sup>27</sup> Yet these connections remain badly understood in the South African context.

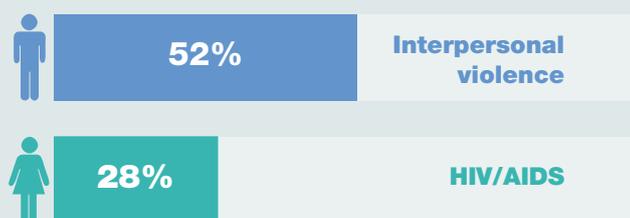


Figure 8: Leading cause of death among male and female youth

Health data presented on the Youth Explorer further show that:

- The top two causes of death among male youth (aged 15 – 24) in Cape Town are interpersonal violence and road injuries. Over the 2010-2013 period, 52% of deaths among young men were due to interpersonal violence and 12% were due to road injuries.
- HIV/AIDS and TB account for over 40% of female youth deaths. From 2010-2013, 28% of deaths among young women were due to HIV/AIDS and 13% were due to TB.
- In the Western Cape, antenatal HIV prevalence among those aged 15-24 was 13% in 2014, a slight increase from previous years.<sup>28</sup> Since infections in this age group are assumed to be new or recent, it is critical that prevention efforts aimed at this cohort are enhanced.
- Cape Town continues to face relatively high levels of teen pregnancy, despite decreases over the last 10 years. The

percentage of under 18 pregnancies to total pregnancies decreased from 9% in 2005-06 to 7% in 2014-2015.<sup>29</sup>

Considering the importance of health at this youth stage, it is vital to:

- Adopt an **integrated approach** to the design of prevention and treatment programmes that addresses the links between poverty, mental health and risk behaviour.

- Monitor implementation of **youth-friendly clinics** and the Integrated School Health Policy to ensure welcoming, confidential, quality and easy-to-access health care services.
- Prioritise **support for teen parents** including early antenatal care, social assistance, parenting programmes and child care services so teen mothers can complete their education.

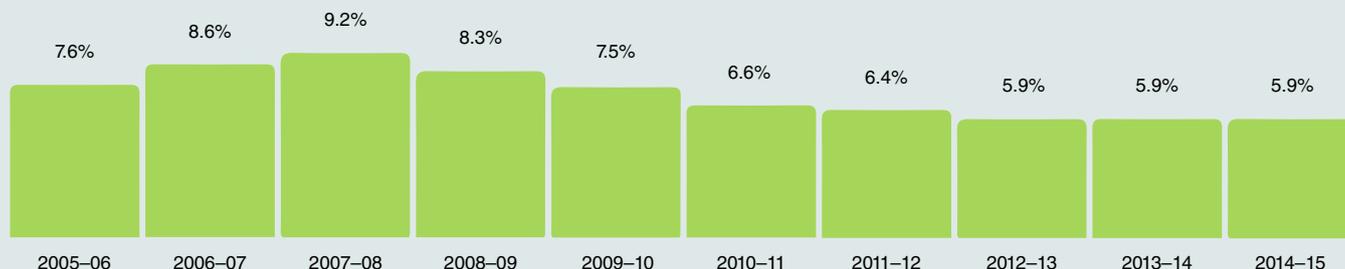


Figure 9: Teenage pregnancy rate by year<sup>30</sup>

## Economic opportunities

The official unemployment rate in Cape Town for youth aged 15 – 24 was 46% in 2011 – and this rate increases to 56% if discouraged work-seekers are included.<sup>21</sup> Analysis of national level data shows that low educational outcomes and the structure of the labour market are key drivers of youth unemployment as the demand for labour is highest for skilled and experienced employees (with a post-school qualification).<sup>22</sup> In Cape Town, unemployment is highest for youth without a matric (57%) and lowest for those with any tertiary education and training (17%).<sup>23</sup>

Data presented on the Youth Explorer further show that:

- Unemployment is especially high for young people living in the south-eastern periphery of the Metro, with youth unemployment rates above 65% in parts of Langa, Gugulethu, Crossroads, Delft and Khayelitsha. Long distances between living areas and jobs, and significant transport costs, make it particularly difficult for these young people to navigate entry into the labour market.<sup>24</sup>
- Furthermore, 21% of youth in the Cape Metro live in households where no working-age adults (age 18-64) are employed. This goes up to 30-40% for youth living in some of the townships or informal settlements in the Metro. While youth living in workless households are likely to be financially disadvantaged, they are also likely to have limited exposure to the working world or to information about available jobs, putting them at a further disadvantage.<sup>25</sup>
- A particularly vulnerable group are youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Overall, 33%

of Cape Town youth fall into this category. Geographically, pockets with especially high concentrations of NEET youth are located in the south-eastern periphery of the Metro, with rates as high as 40 - 50%.

As a result of the many barriers to accessing employment, young people are often faced with extended periods of joblessness and unsuccessful job searches where they run the risk of becoming depressed, discouraged and chronically unemployed.<sup>26</sup> Major changes can only be expected once the labour market is able to produce more jobs and absorb more unskilled labour, or the education system produces job-seekers with the required skills.

In the interim it is important to:

- **Make young people more employable** through skills programmes and learnerships.
- Ensure **second chance educational routes** for learners who dropped out of school prematurely.
- Motivate employers to **increase their demand for youth employees**.
- Explore how the social grant system, travel vouchers, saving schemes and better access to clear information can **help young people access jobs**.
- **Create more jobs** that suit the skills levels of young people.
- **Evaluate existing programmes** aimed at tackling youth unemployment and make the necessary adjustments so that they can also **reach the most vulnerable youth**.

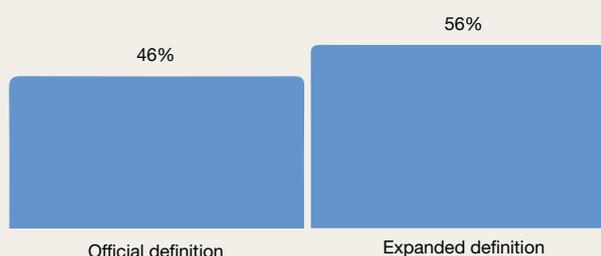


Figure 6: Youth unemployment rate by definition

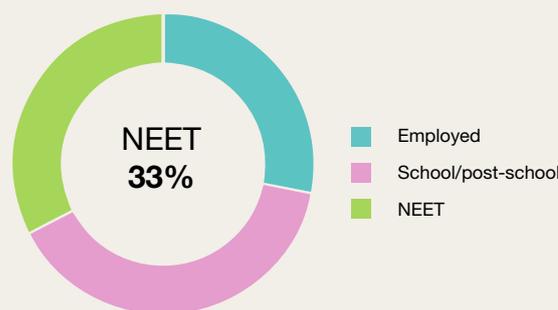


Figure 7: Youth by employment, education and training status

# Overarching recommendations for policy and practice<sup>31</sup>

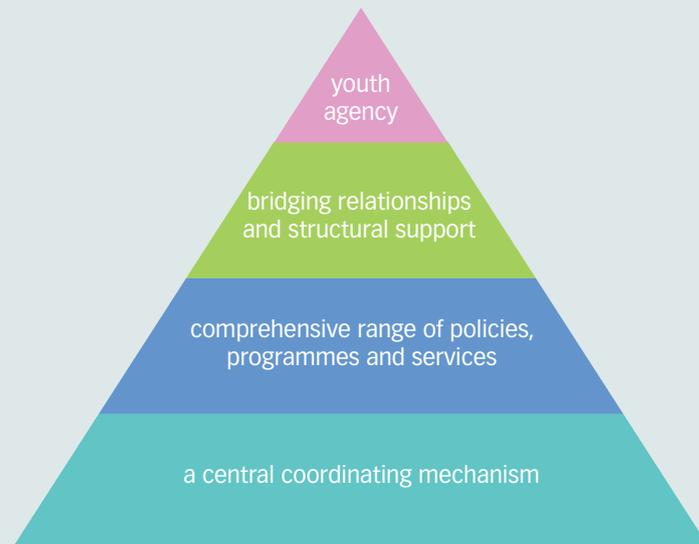
Young people living in Cape Town experience challenges across multiple aspects of their lives. It is important to consider the possibility of a comprehensive social security programme for these young people, in order to increase their chances of breaking poverty traps for themselves and their children. The evidence in this policy brief points to the importance of improving literacy and numeracy levels for all, and preventing school drop-out, aspects that are not part of the core, local government function and therefore do not receive much attention in the current policies of the City of Cape Town. Nevertheless, in the spirit of working towards comprehensive support for youth, in a transversal, cross-governmental way, it is recommended that the City seeks ways to incorporate an emphasis on these education challenges in its existing programmes. Further, enabling access to higher education, training and the labour market, understanding and alleviating the heavy burden of disease among young people are other areas that need to be addressed. In addition, it is imperative that the structural support and coordinating mechanisms recognise and build on young people's agency and aspirations.

## 1. Take youth seriously

Those who hold political power must in the first instance take youth and their aspirations for a better life seriously. Youth should be included as legitimate stakeholders with equal voice. This requires a focused, developmental approach which recognises and deliberately fosters **youth agency**. It includes actively seeking out young people's views to inform and enhance the design and delivery of policies, programmes and services. It is also necessary to provide young people with the tools that would enable them to activate their citizenship, to participate in democratic communities, and to think critically and act deliberately.

## 2. Provide bridging relationships and structural support

Many young people lack the information and social networks they need to make informed choices and to access opportunities. Creating appropriate **bridging relationships and structural support** is therefore essential to enable youth to access resources, negotiate adverse environments, navigate the systems, and achieve the best possible outcomes. This includes improving the provision of basic services such as quality education and health care for all, and increasing levels of youth employment, but also relates to the provision of clear and comprehensive study and career guidance, financial support and parenting support. It also involves extending the reach of youth-focused skills development and public works programmes, as well as internship and mentoring opportunities.



## 3. Develop effective policies, programmes and services

The City of Cape Town's Youth Development Policy<sup>32</sup> and Transversal Youth Development Strategy<sup>33</sup> promote a comprehensive approach to youth development in order to address a range of structural barriers and unlock real change for young people. They require concrete implementation plans that incorporate cross-cutting strategies to address the ways in which the multiple dimensions of poverty intersect and constrain young people's lives. Key City plans, for example the Integrated Development Plan, should also include a transversal focus on youth.

## 4. Provide strong leadership and coordination

Post-apartheid policies have adopted a fragmented approach to youth development. The proliferation of agencies and youth desks at local, provincial and national government levels has hindered effective coordination and accountability. The establishment of a central coordinating body with the authority to steer implementation and hold other departments accountable is essential, at all levels of government.

## The Western Cape Youth Explorer

The Poverty and Inequality Initiative's *Western Cape Youth Explorer* provides a range of indicators that measure and track youth well-being at the sub-provincial level. These indicators have been developed in collaboration with a range of government, civil society and academic stakeholders to adequately capture the dimensions of well-being needed to inform the implementation of the Western Cape and City of Cape Town youth development plans. The online Youth Explorer was built in partnership with the City of Cape Town, the Western Cape Government, Statistics South Africa and Code for South Africa. The work aims to contribute to more effective policy design and implementation for young people.

### Suggested citation

De Lannoy A & Frame E (2016) *Youth in Cape Town: The need to implement a multi-sectoral approach to support youth well-being*. Cape Town: Poverty and Inequality Initiative, South African Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town. [policy brief]

### Acknowledgements

This brief draws directly on the policy brief that accompanied the 2015 *South African Child Gauge*: De Lannoy A & Lake L (2015) *Youth: An opportunity to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

The full set of essays and statistical tables of the 2015 *Child Gauge* are available at [www.ci.uct.ac.za](http://www.ci.uct.ac.za).

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### Endnotes

- 1 For an overview of relevant data, see De Lannoy A, Swartz S, Lake L & Smith C (eds) *South African Child Gauge 2015*. Cape Town, Children's Institute, UCT.
- 2 City of Cape Town (2016) Five-Year Integrated Development Plan 2012-2017. Cape Town: City of Cape Town, p 88.
- 3 City of Cape Town (2013) City of Cape Town Youth Development Policy. Cape Town: City of Cape Town, p 2.
- 4 City of Cape Town (2015) Transversal Youth Development Strategy. Cape Town: City of Cape Town, p 8.
- 5 See no. 2 above.
- 6 R779 is the rand value, in 2011 prices, of Statistics South Africa's rebased upper-bound poverty line. See: Statistics South Africa (2015) *Methodological report on rebasing of national poverty lines and development on pilot provincial poverty lines – Technical Report*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- 7 Statistics South Africa (2011) *Census*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Emily Frame, Poverty and Inequality Initiative, UCT.
- 8 See no. 7 above.
- 9 De Lannoy A, Leibbrandt M & Frame E (2015) A focus on youth: An opportunity to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty. In: De Lannoy A, Swartz S, Lake L & Smith C (eds) *South African Child Gauge 2015*. Cape Town, Children's Institute, UCT.
- 10 Frame E, De Lannoy A, & Leibbrandt M (2016) Measuring multidimensional poverty among youth in South Africa at the sub-national level (SALDRU Working Paper No. 169). Cape Town: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.
- 11 Frame E, De Lannoy A, Koka P & Leibbrandt M (2016) Multidimensional Youth Poverty: Estimating the Youth MPI in South Africa at ward level. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 189). Cape Town: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.
- 12 The wards used in this document are in line with the electoral wards created by the Municipal Demarcation Board for 2011.
- 13 See no. 10 above.
- 14 Statistics included in the *Western Cape Youth Explorer* are presented, which draws on data from the 100% 2011 Census sample as well as administrative data from the Western Cape Department of Education and Department of Health.
- 15 Van der Berg S, Burger C, Burger R, de Vos M, du Rand G, Gustafsson M, Moses E, Shepherd D, Spaul N, Taylor S, van Broekhuizen H & von Fintel D (2011) *Low Quality Education as a Poverty Trap*. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.
- 16 See no. 7 above.
- 17 Branson N, Hofmeyer C, Papier J & Needham S (2015) Post-school education: Broadening alternative pathways from school to work. In: De Lannoy A, Swartz S, Lake L & Smith C (eds) *South African Child Gauge 2015*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT.
- 18 False Bay College (2015) *Programme Fees 2015*. Viewed 15 September 2015: [www.falsebaycollege.co.za/images/file-downloads/FBC\\_Full\\_Time\\_Programme\\_Fees\\_2015\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](http://www.falsebaycollege.co.za/images/file-downloads/FBC_Full_Time_Programme_Fees_2015_Low_Res.pdf)
- 19 University of Cape Town (2015) *Student Fees 2015*. Viewed 15 July 2015: [www.uct.ac.za/usr/finance/fees/fees2015.pdf](http://www.uct.ac.za/usr/finance/fees/fees2015.pdf).
- 20 Department of Higher Education and Training (2014) *Statistics on Post-school Education and Training in South Africa: 2012*. Pretoria: DHET.
- 21 See no. 7 above. This statistic may differ depending on the method used to derive labour market status.
- 22 Graham L & Mlatsheni C (2015) Youth unemployment in South Africa: Understanding the challenge and working on solutions. In: De Lannoy A, Swartz S, Lake L & Smith C (eds) *South African Child Gauge 2015*. Cape Town, Children's Institute, UCT.
- 23 See no. 7 above.
- 24 See no. 22 above.
- 25 Burns J, Godlonton S & Keswell M (2010) *Social networks, employment and worker discouragement: Evidence from South Africa*. *Labour Economics*, 17(2), 336–344.
- 26 See no. 22 above.
- 27 Lund C, de Silva M, Plagerson S, Cooper S, Chisholm D, Das J, Knapp M & Patel V (2012) *Poverty and Mental disorders: Breaking the Cycle in Low-income and Middle-income Countries*. Prime Policy Brief 1. Cape Town: Programme for Improving Mental Health Care, UCT.
- 28 The data for Cape Town has not yet been received.
- 29 Pregnancies include deliveries and termination of pregnancies done in a healthcare facility.
- 30 The teenage pregnancy rate is calculated as deliveries and termination of pregnancies to females under 18 years as a percentage of total deliveries and termination of pregnancies done in a healthcare facility.
- 31 De Lannoy A & Lake L (2015) *Youth: An opportunity to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.
- 32 See no. 3 above.
- 33 See no. 4 above.