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NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2008 - 2013

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NAT YA Develop
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Foreword

In the spirit of recognizing the sacrifices and contributions made and continue to be made by young people, through the review of the country's National Youth Policy, Government demonstrates its firm commitment to creating a conducive environment that can develop and empower young people in a sustainable manner. The environment has been created through the development of policies, programmes and enabling legislations specifically aimed at empowering young people to become active agents of positive changes in their lives, communities and society at large.

Post 1994, in consultation with a number of youth bodies, the South African government adopted several youth focused legislative and policy frameworks such as the National Youth Commission Act (Act No.19 of 1996), the National Youth Policy 2000, and the National Youth Development Policy Framework 2002-2007. These pieces of legislation and policies firmly outlined institutional arrangements for youth development and further outlined the country's perspective on how delivery of services for young people is to occur.

Due to the multifaceted challenges hindering on cohesion of the youth in our society particularly on the economic front, an integrated and holistic approach to youth development was adopted. Integrated youth development refers to the holistic development of young people, and also to the need for various aspects of public policy to function synergistically in equipping young people with knowledge, skills and values they require to make appropriate choices throughout their lives. The notion of integrated youth development thus suggests that youth development cannot be relegated to peripheral programmatic actions; instead, young people should be placed at the centre of national development. The developmental challenges of the youth cannot be eradicated by a single sector. The solution therefore lies in multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach to youth development. This translate into involvement of all line function departments across government spheres, relevant state entities, parastatals, civil society, private sector organizations, and young people in spearheading developmental initiatives geared at ensuring development of the youth.

2007 was the year that the NYDPF expired and there was a need for an assessment of previous interventions and identification of gaps where they continue to prevail. The National Youth Policy 2008-2013 comes as a result of this review and succinctly outlines interventionist mechanisms that will further close these gaps, strengthen existing interventions, and enhance an integrated approach to youth development in the country. As with any public policy process, a vigorous public participation process was undertaken by the National Youth Commission, where input was requested and received from youth organizations (national and provincial), government departments, research institutions and the broader civil society movements.

In line with some of the challenges identified in the NYDPF, the NYP 2008–2013 is accompanied by an implementation plan and a monitoring and evaluation tool to ensure uniform implementation of the policy as well as effective monitoring and evaluation. All these will ensure accountability to the public, particularly the youth sector and young people for which this policy is primarily designed.

The National Youth Policy is bound to cause excitement among young people as it represents a milestone achievement and the basis upon which youth development interventions will be planned. This represents the Government's commitment to youth development. It is thus with great pride and honour that I present to you the second generation National Youth Policy 2008–2013 with the hope that as a country we will pull together to ensure attainment of the goals and objectives articulated in this Policy.

Minister in the Presidency
Dr Essop Pahad

Preface

The National Youth Commission was established through the National Youth Commission Act (1996) as a part of the Government's plan to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the multi-faceted problems and challenges facing young people in South Africa. This laid a firm foundation for government to set a tone for youth development. Part of the mandate of National Youth Commission is the task of developing an Integrated National Youth Policy and to co-ordinate other responsibilities as they relate to National Youth Policy and youth development priorities at large.

Through an intensive youth led process, the National Youth Commission developed the National Youth Policy (2000), which was never adopted by government, but remains an internal document essential in the lobbying and advocacy role of the NYC. Subsequently to this process, the National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) 2002-2007 was developed and adopted by government. NYDPF outlined the context for government's action and advocated for an integrated, holistic youth development. It suggested a single policy objective that is underpinned by four critical components i.e. productive youth, youth as active and effective citizens, social inclusion of youth, and sustainable youth development.

The development of the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 was born as a result of the mandate of the NYC to develop policies and review impact of previous policies that had been used in the country for youth development. In developing the National Youth Policy 2008-2013, NYC undertook extensive research and consultation processes with various stakeholders in youth sector. These included research institutions, youth organizations, sectoral groups, governments departments and the private sector.

Through the participation of these groups in the policy formulation process, the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 has been designed to address amongst others the following key areas identified as major challenges: Education, Economic Participation, Health and Wellbeing, Social Cohesion, National Youth Service, and Youth Work.

The National Youth Policy represents a major and historical milestone in youth development and is an expression of the youth sector's commitment to the overall development of all young women and men. This policy creates an environment wherein all stakeholders in youth development space should work towards a common vision and a better South Africa for all. The success and failures of the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 will be measured through improvement in the quality of lives of young people and their contribution to the broader society.

Two hands are better than one; let us thus stand united in ensuring holistic and sustainable development of all South African Youth.

National Youth Commission Chairperson

Ms Nomi Nkondlo

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Youth Policy (NYP) 2008-2013 forms part of a global trend where governments are formulating youth policies that respond to the changing conditions of young people in the 21st Century. While this policy speaks to the particular needs and circumstances of South Africa's youth, it locates them within the African family and the global community. As countries worldwide engage in a process of continuous policy renewal, the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 seeks both to contribute to this process and be informed by it.

It is within this context that South Africa's democracy and its social development approach to public policy created an enabling environment in which the lives, work and prosperity of young people are placed at the centre of the country's growth and development. This is geared towards ensuring global and regional integration as well as addressing the challenges and demands of the 21st Century. All these, seek to promote the developmental state in South Africa, protect democracy, support economic development, wealth creation and distribution, and to provide the strategic leadership in the fight to eradicate poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment.

It is clear that the future of South Africa's youth, and thus the future of the country as a whole, is intimately affected by this policy disposition. Therefore government in partnership with different role players must ensure that all young people access the opportunities that enable them to grow, develop and prosper as fully engaged, responsive and productive citizens. At the same time, all these role players must support young people who, by virtue of their vulnerability and other constraints, find themselves relegated to the margins of society and are unable to benefit from the policy dispensations offered by our democracy.

The development of the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 is based on the National Integrated Youth Development Strategy of the youth sector.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, far-reaching opportunities were created through the transformation process. These included development of legislation and policies to guide interventions. Similarly, a need to develop the National Youth Policy (2000) was also identified and this process took place in 2000. The NYP, 2000, although it was never adopted, it remained a guiding policy for the youth sector and it also gave rise to the development of a National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) in 2002. The NYDPF covers a period of five years, ending in 2007. It is on this basis that the need to develop a comprehensive National Youth Policy to provide direction to youth focused interventions beyond 2007 is necessary.

The National Youth Policy 2008-2013 is built on the foundation of both policy and programmatic interventions implemented for young people between 1994 and 2007. In many instances, these initiatives have resulted in far-reaching transformation. Although there is ample evidence suggesting that considerable progress has been made towards meeting the objectives of these interventions and in addressing the challenges faced by young people as the target audience, the unfolding process of transformation had also revealed policy gaps and challenges that remain. The National Youth Policy 2008-2013 is specifically aimed at closing the identified gaps, addressing the challenges and recommending new measures to improve and accelerate thereby making major strides in the development of young people by ensuring that they assume their rightful place in building a non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and democratic South Africa.

It is in that spirit that President Thabo Mbeki, in his 2007 State of the Nation address, urged all key role players to "intensify efforts to integrate youth development into the mainstream of government work". This call was also echoed in the Government's Social Cluster Programme of Action for 2007 and 2008, which directs the cluster to:

- "intensify efforts to integrate youth development into the mainstream of government policies and programmes within the framework of the National Youth Policy, and
- strategically locate Youth Units/ Directorates in such a manner that Directors-General, Heads of Departments and Municipal Managers take direct responsibility."

The fact that youth programmes have found expression in the government's programme of action is a clear illustration of the manner in which the South African Government prioritises the development of young people.

This policy is therefore prepared for the entire South African youth sector, with the intention of closing the identified gaps, strengthening the existing interventions, introducing new ones, shedding those that have not worked, enhancing the quality of the services rendered, extending coverage and increasing impact. It further provides a basis for review of key achievements and emerging trends in the field of youth development by reflecting on the role of youth, those responsible for provision of their services, and key social support systems. As a strategic document, the policy will consequently offer a set of policy priorities and recommendations as way forward in order to turn the general concept of youth development into action thus ensuring that young women and men realize their potential to the fullest whilst contributing to the overall development of society at large.

The rationale of the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 is thus to:

- identify gaps in the current policy and propose strategic policy interventions designed to fill them, thus speeding up further development of youth;
- defining the targets of the new interventions;
- addressing the continuous needs of the youth by focusing on areas where supplementary action is required;
- ensuring mainstreaming of youth development in programmes run by different key role players;
- positioning policy implementation in the context of institutional responsibilities and processes;
- mapping the process through which progress on policy implementation will be assessed; and
- specifying the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the purposes of accountability and continuous improvement of interventions.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

South Africa's conception of youth development is influenced by the historical conditions that have shaped the country, and its democratic goals. It is based on the principles of social and economic justice, human rights, empowerment, participation, active citizenship, the promotion of public benefit, and distributive and liberal values. Youth development therefore determines South Africa's future; hence it is at the core of its development agenda. As the share of a country's working age population increases, the opportunity may emerge to create an economic growth spurt, provided young people can be productively employed (Bloom, Canning & Sevilla, 2002; UNIFEM & UNFPA, 2006; Moultrie, 2007).

It is therefore clear that, young people should be considered as beneficiaries and as agents of change and not as passive recipients of government services. The shaping of young people as active and productive citizens is therefore critical for the production of a 'demographic dividend' which is referred to as "a rise in the rate of economic growth due to a rising share of working age people in a population". While countries in East and South East Asia were at the forefront of this phenomenon, African countries are said to be starting this transition only now. The policy proposals made here are intended to create the conditions through which South Africa would seize the opportunity to capture the demographic dividend through comprehensive effort, resulting in overall development and inclusion of youth.

Looking ahead, this policy needs to respond to the social and economic forces that shape global and regional development in the 21st Century. In the context of our democracy, our commitment to human rights and our social development approach to public policy, young people need to be placed at the centre of national development. On the other hand, in pursuit of the objectives of a developmental state, characterised by strong collaboration between government, civil society, the private sector, communities, families and individuals, it is crucial that opportunities are created for young people to enable them to deal with the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. This could be achieved if these youth are well located socially, politically and economically, and meaningfully engaged at community level thus ensuring democratic involvement, acquisition of first-hand knowledge and experience of civic action. It is also equally critical that there must be greater integration and coordination among various key role players in provision of youth services.

Youth development should be viewed as an integral part of addressing the challenges of South Africa's development. It should also be seen as a central process of building a non-sexist, non-racist, democratic society, and must be approached with the same vigour as all other processes of transformation. The development of young people must also be aligned to the government's approach to addressing poverty and underdevelopment, as well as a mechanism for promotion of social adjustment, social cohesion, and economic emancipation attained through comprehensive, integrated, cross-sectoral and sustainable policies and programmes that seek to bring about tangible improvements in the quality of their lives.

Disadvantaged youth must be empowered to overcome conditions which disadvantaged them. In the same manner, marginalised youth and those that have fallen out of the educational, social and economic mainstream must be re-integrated through second-chance measures and other supportive actions.

A multi-sectoral approach involving stakeholders in the public sector, civil society and the private sector where all these key role players work together in promoting youth development and providing youth services is essential. This can be achieved if an integrated approach to delivery of youth development services is taken through coordinating efforts/ initiatives/ interventions of various key role players issues in public policy and programmes, coordination of various efforts, and if there is accountability of all role players.

4. POLICY VISION

The vision of the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 remains consistent with the one contained in the *National Youth Development Policy Framework (2002: 8)* and is as follows:

Integrated, holistic and sustainable youth development, conscious of the historical imbalances and current imbalances and current realities, to build a non-sexist, non-racist, democratic South Africa in which young people and their organisations not only enjoy and contribute to their full potential in the social, economic and political spheres of life but also recognise and develop their responsibilities to build a better life for all".

5. POLICY GOAL

The goal of National Youth Policy 2008-2013 is to:

intentionally enhance the capacities of young people through addressing their needs, promoting positive outcomes, and providing integrated coordinated package of services, opportunities, choices, relationship and support necessary for holistic development of all young people particularly those outside the social, political and economic mainstream.

6. OBJECTIVES

In line with the above stated policy goal, the objectives of the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 are to:

- 6.1 integrate youth development into the mainstream of government policies, programmes and the national budget;
- 6.2 ensure that mainstream policies function effectively and curb the marginalisation of young people;
- 6.3 strengthen the capacity of key youth development institutions and ensure integration and coordination in the delivery of youth services;
- 6.4 strengthen the capacities of young people to enable them to take charge of their own wellbeing through building their assets and ultimately realising their potential to the fullest;
- 6.5 strengthen a culture of citizenship among young people and help them to become responsible adults who care for their families and others;
- 6.6 support prioritised youth groups and ensure that they have every opportunity to play their part in the development of our country;
- 6.7 foster a sense of national cohesion, while acknowledging existence of diverse circumstances and needs by providing opportunities to address these;
- 6.8 inculcate the spirit of patriotism by encouraging visible and active participation in different youth initiatives/projects and nation building activities;
- 6.9 promote the culture of treating all races in South Africa with dignity as well as embracing the African values, such as "ubuntu" at all times;
- 6.10 create a wider range of learning pathways to provide young people with multiple routes and exit opportunities for making the transition from youth to adulthood smoother;
- 6.11 design and implement interventions that seek to provide a wide variety of opportunities for needy young people.
- 6.12 create a safe environment free from discrimination, abuse, and violence, in which young people feel protected.

7. OUTCOME

The desired outcome of the above stated policy goal is to produce:

empowered young people who are able to realise their full potential and understand their roles and responsibilities in making meaningful contribution to the development of a non racial prosperous South Africa.

8. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The formulation of the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 is informed and based on the following key legislative and policy frameworks:

- 8.1 The Constitution** – The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 is the supreme law of the country entrenching specific rights, responsibilities and an ethos that all South Africans are to uphold. In the Bill of rights, specific human rights are guaranteed and these rights and responsibilities guide the inherent rights and responsibilities of all young South Africans.
- 8.2 National Youth Commission Act of 1996** – The National Youth Commission was established as a statutory body charged with formulating a National Youth Policy, co-ordinating the implementation of such a policy as well as lobbying and advocating for youth development in the country.
- 8.3 National Youth Policy 2000 (developed in 1997)** – Although this policy was never adopted, it largely informed the Cabinet's decision to endorse and adopt the National Youth Development

Policy Framework. It also gave direction on action steps that need to be undertaken by the state and society at large to meet the challenges faced by the country's youth.

8.4 National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) 2002-2007 - The NYDPF provided the context for the government's youth action, arguing for an integrated, holistic youth development strategy. It further articulates the values of equity, diversity, redress, responsiveness to the needs and contexts of young people, and an orientation that is sustainable, participatory, inclusive, gender sensitive, accessible and transparent. The lessons learnt from the NYDPF showed that more focused policy direction is required to respond to the changing needs of young people in the 21st Century.

8.5 The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) - This document places major emphasis on the needs and challenges of youth as well as the specific interventions to be utilised to ensure development of young people. This was the first government policy document to articulate the need for a professionalise youth work in an effort to build capacity for those responsible for provision of youth development services so that they can they can adequately and effectively address the challenges faced by the youth within their respective communities.

8.6 The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (1994) - The RDP was a plan by the newly democratically elected government to redress social and economic challenges faced by the country as a result of discriminatory policies of the previous governments. The RDP made specific commitments to the empowerment of SA women, youth, rural and disabled persons. The RDP committed the government to ensuring that suitable programmes aimed at young people are established to ensure redress of backlogs in education and training, job creation, and recreation.

8.7 World Programme of Action on Youth (2000) - The United Nations Ministers responsible for the youth from different countries adopted the World Programme of Action on Youth for the year 2000 and beyond. This is a 10 year plan aimed at effectively addressing the problems of young people. It is a policy framework that seeks to deliver opportunities that would enhance young people's participation in society and provide practical guidelines for youth development's support by national and international institutions. The plan contains concrete proposals on how countries should improve the wellbeing and livelihoods of young people in their respective countries.

8.8 African Youth Charter (2006): The African Youth Charter is a political and legal document which serves as a strategic framework that gives direction for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional and national levels. The Charter is inline with the efforts of the African Union that seek to provide an avenue for effective youth development. The Charter was adopted in May 2006, and then endorsed by African Union Heads of States in July 2006. South Africa is in the process of ratifying and signing the Charter. The African Youth Charter is consistent with the South African Constitution and virtually all its provisions are in line with the socio-economic programmes being implemented, or envisaged.

9. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

In South Africa the concept of youth development has been shaped by the long history of struggle against apartheid. Throughout our history, young people have acted as drivers of change and have participated actively in the development of a socially inclusive and economically empowering society. Youth development is therefore guided by the vision of a non-racial and non-sexist democracy that is being built through transformation, reconstruction and development. All these have shaped the following values and principles which underpin youth development today:

9.1 Values

The policy promotes the following values:

- Inherent worth and inborn dignity of youth. The provision of services should therefore reflect respect for the worth and dignity of youth as human beings who should be supported to unleash their inherent strengths and potential thus countering the view of widespread deficiency and pathology-oriented perception.
- Empowerment of young people as assets for national development. Interventions should raise the confidence of youth so that they can contribute meaningfully to their own development and to the broader society.
- Young people as instruments and agents of their own development.
- Young people are social beings belonging to a network of structures as family and community which are essential to their development. It is critical that these support systems are strengthened to ensure proper development of youth.
- The promotion of social and economic inclusion as well as integration of young people into the mainstream of society and the economy.
- Intentional youth-focussed interventions that prioritise addressing the needs of young people effectively.

9.2 Principles

The policy is underpinned by the following principles most of which have been extracted from the National Youth Development Policy Framework, 2002:08:

- **Accessibility** - young women and men of diverse backgrounds must access resources and services crucial to their total development.
- **Responsiveness** – all youth development service providers should respond to the needs and concerns of young people and be guided by the intention to act in their best interests thus maximising their human potential.
- **Holistic** - Youth development initiatives must encompass all aspects of a young person's life and respond to their physical, psychological, social, economic and spiritual needs within the socio-political environment thus ensuring that they gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience required to ensure smooth transition into adult life.
- **Integration** – the need for different key role players such as government, civil society, private and business sectors to coordinate their efforts to ensure greater impact in developing young people.
- **Diversity** - youth development interventions must recognise and acknowledge the diverse backgrounds from which young people come from and celebrate the roles played by different agents of socialization, tradition, culture and spirituality in the development of young women and men.
- **Non-discriminatory** - all youth development initiatives should not discriminate against young people on the basis of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability or any other form of discrimination as enshrined in the Constitution of the country. This principle acknowledges the impact of socialisation and promotes respect for the human rights.
- **Sustainable development** - young people's assets, potential, capacity and capability must be maximised so that they can respond effectively and efficiently to life's challenges without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Transparency** - institutions and organisations involved in youth development should operate in a transparent and accountable manner.
- **Participation and inclusion** – service providers must design policies, strategies and programmes for and with young people by sharing information, creating opportunities and involving them in decision making as active participants in their own development. Young

people should own the outcomes of the development process and should view human rights as a fundamental basis for human development.

- **Social cohesion** - youth development interventions should promote inclusion of young people as significant part of societal structures by involving them in democratic and nation-building activities.
- **Social protection** - different youth development interventions should seek to promote the wellbeing of young people by putting in place measures that seek to protect and address the needs of youth thus reducing their vulnerability.
- **Youth Service** – young people should be involved in meaningful activities which benefit communities whilst developing their sense of patriotism and their abilities through learning and service.
- **Redress** - it is essential to recognise the different ways in which young people have been affected by the injustices of the past and address these injustices through equitable policies, programmes and resource allocation.

10. DEFINING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The National Youth Policy 2008-2013 defines youth development as:

an intentional comprehensive approach that provides space, opportunities and support for young people to maximise their individual and collective creative energies for personal development as well as development of the broader society of which they are an integral part.

This definition finds expression in the National Youth Development Policy Framework 2002-2007:

'We celebrate the roles of young women and men in South Africa and their contribution to the reconstruction and development of their communities and the country. We recognise the contributions young people make to our society and build upon the imagination, energy, vibrancy and talents of all young women and men. These contributions need to be enhanced through initiatives that will bring about personal development for young people and their organisations' (National Youth Development Policy Framework, 2002: 3).

It is worth noting that, all of the above definitions emphasise total and positive development of young people. This policy in turn emphasise the need for various youth development efforts and interventions to respond to the needs of young people by focusing on **all** aspects or spheres of their lives. It therefore goes without saying that, interventions targeting this population group should also be geared towards responding to their needs holistically.

11. DEFINING AND PROFILING YOUTH

The National Youth Policy 2008-2013 is used inclusively to refer to young people as those falling within the age group of 14 to 35 years. This is based on the mandate of the National Youth Commission Act 1996 and the National Youth Policy 2000. This inclusive approach takes into account, both historical as well as present-day conditions. Although much has changed for young people since the advent of democracy in 1994, the motivation for 35 as the upper age limit of the youth has not yet changed since historical imbalances in the country are yet to be fully addressed. This definition is also in consistent with the definition of youth as contained in the African Youth Charter (AU, 2006).which defines youth as those between the ages of 15 and 35, although the latter excludes the 14 year olds. This does not present a challenge as South Africa includes a broader rather than narrower definition of youth.

Of particular importance is the fact that the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 supplements this age range by segmenting the youth population in age cohorts and target groups in recognition of significant differences that exist in these youth groupings in terms of their unique situations and

needs. All these acknowledge the fact that young people are not a homogenous group and a differentiated approach should be adopted in dealing with them. The policy therefore acknowledges that the 14-35 age range is by no means a blanket general standard, but within the parameters of this age range young people can be disaggregated by race, age, gender, social class, geographic location etc.

The differentiated approach makes it possible for policy to take into account definitions which are stipulated in other relevant pieces of legislation and policies such as proposal of 15-28 as the age range for youth as in the National Youth Development Policy Framework (National Youth Commission, 2002); definition of a child as a person up to the age of 18 as in the Children's Act No. 35 of 2005; and reference to young offenders as those between the ages of 14 and 25 as reflected in the Correctional Services Act, (Dept. of Correctional Services, 2003); as well as distinction of a child from an "adult youth" by the criminal justice system which does not consider the latter as a specialised group in need of special rehabilitative programmes.

As outlined in the rationale for this youth policy, South Africa aspires to produce *young people who are empowered, able to realise their full potential, and understand their roles and responsibilities in making meaningful contribution to the development of the country*. This policy should therefore develop all young people, particularly the prioritised target groups whilst striving to give second chances to those who have fallen outside of the mainstream. This is critical for South Africa, since according to Statistics South Africa (2007), young people constitute 36.4 per cent of the country's population. The Table below illustrates the fact that the youth population is increasing relative to children and adult populations. This phenomenon is referred to as the "youth bulge".

The Table below illustrates that the South African population is predominantly young, with youth constituting the largest segment as compared to other population groups. This therefore suggests the critical need to focus on investing in young people if this country is to be developed. This investment could only be attained if young people are totally developed, the challenges they are faced with are addressed and the vicious cycles of social ills they encounter is broken. If South Africa does not focus on youth development, it runs a risk of undermining all its development and growth efforts.

Population Age	Male %		Female %		Total %	
	1994	2008	1994	2008	1994	2008
0-13 years	35.3	30.3	33.4	28.3	34.3	29.3
14-24 years	22.0	22.8	21.7	21.5	21.9	22.1
25-35 years	17.3	18.6	17.3	17.5	17.3	18.0
36+	25.4	28.2	27.5	32.7	26.5	30.5

Source: ASSA projections in Budlender (2008).

12. TARGET YOUTH GROUPS

Young people are not a homogenous group since they are diverse and have diverse needs. In the same manner, there should be equally diverse and unique interventions designed to address those needs. It is crucial therefore that mainstream policies and programmes across all different sectors should work synergically if the needs of young people are to be effectively addressed.

This policy recognises various challenges facing youth from diverse backgrounds. It also acknowledges that problems experienced by individual categories of targeted youth groups are unique, multifaceted and require involvement of various services providers across different sectors. Therefore it would be important to identify the broad categories of targeted youth groups requiring specialized and tailored interventions. They include, but are not limited to the following:

- Young women,
- Young men,
- Youth in secondary school,
- Youth in tertiary institutions,
- School aged out of school youth,
- Unemployed youth,
- Youth in the workplace,
- Youth from poor households,
- Youth from different racial groups,
- Teenage parents,
- Orphaned youth,
- Youth heading households,
- Youth with disabilities,
- Youth living with HIV and Aids and other communicable diseases,
- Youth in conflict with the law,
- Youth abusing dependency creating substances,
- Homeless youth living on the street,
- Youth in rural areas,
- Youth in townships,
- Youth in cities,
- Youth in informal settlements,
- Young migrants,
- Young refugees.

The National Youth Policy 2008-2013, whilst emphasizing development of **all** youth acknowledges the reality of limitation of resources and as a result prioritises that efforts and intervention should give second chance to the most marginalized and excluded youth groups. Of the stated categories, this policy argues that immediate attention should be given to the following prioritised youth target groups:

- Young women;
- Youth with disabilities;
- Unemployed youth;
- School aged out of school youth;
- Youth in rural areas;
- Youth at risk i.e. youth living with HIV and Aids, youth heading households; youth in conflict with the law, and youth abusing dependency creating substances.

This policy further advocates for cooperation of the government clusters in ensuring youth development. An inter-cluster plan of action stating who is responsible for what, and the criteria on which decisions are to be based is needed if greater impact is to be made in giving attention to the specific needs of each target group.

12.1 Young women

South African young women face specific challenges and particular difficulties in our society today. They are more likely to be unemployed than males, since they tend to have fewer occupational opportunities in a patriarchal society. They experience these challenges as a result of historical gender stereotypes which often result in gender imbalances. They are also more vulnerable as opposed to their male counterparts. For example, according to research, the proportion of young women giving birth before the age of 18 stands at 30% (Grant and Hallman, 2006:3). This translates into fewer occupational opportunities for women due to expected family responsibilities of starting families at an early age. Some of the challenges include women as victims of violence and abuse and often they feel threatened and powerless. In addition, the impact of HIV and AIDS has

also had an enormous impact on young women. All these and other factors make it necessary to deliberately give attention to this target group.

This policy advocates for specific gender focused interventions targeting young women and taking into consideration the gender imbalances and consequently promoting gender parity. These include but are not limited to education and capacity building programmes such as: take a girl child to work campaign, and a campaign on 16 days and 365 days of no violence against women and children.

Great strides have been made in realising gender parity and there exists a strong set of institutional mechanisms that deal with the challenges of gender inequality. However, there remains a need to strengthen these efforts by strengthening gender mainstreaming, designing programmes that target young women in rural areas, and ensuring better coordination to ensure maximum impact.

12.2 Youth with disabilities

Young people with disabilities should participate equally in society alongside their 'able-bodied' peers. This could be achieved if disability is approached as a human right and developmental issue (Draft National Disability Framework, 2008). The youth with disabilities, similarly require support and assistance to ensure that they have access to a variety of resources. At present, they are unable to compete with their peers due to inability to access those resources. This applies with greater force to youth with disabilities living in rural areas.

South Africa has ratified the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities. The implication of that decision is that, the country is expected to outlaw all provisions in legislation and policies that discriminate against persons with disabilities. The efforts by the South African government in addressing the needs of people with disabilities are noted. There are policies and structures in place aimed at addressing the needs of people with disabilities including youth. For example: there are offices of the status of persons with disabilities at national and provincial levels located within the office of the Presidency and the Premier's offices respectively. In terms of education, the White Paper on Special Needs Education (Dept. of Education, 2001) and the draft National Disability Framework (2008) makes provision for the creation of equal educational opportunities and delivery of services for people with disabilities within the school, workplace and the broader community. On the other hand, an Integrated National Disability Strategy (RSA, 1997) also outlines priorities that need attention with regard to mainstreaming services for people with disabilities.

There is also greater appreciation of the invaluable role played by young people with disabilities in society, despite real challenges they face everyday. If an enabling environment is created for these youth, they will certainly contribute towards betterment of society and there is a need to do more by mainstreaming disability issues at local level and prioritizing issues affecting young people with disabilities.

12.3 Unemployed youth

The South African economy is reported to be growing at an impressive annual rate of 4.5%, up from a mere 2-3% average in 2002. However, with roughly 834 000 formal sector jobs created between 2002 and 2006, there are concerns that these numbers are insufficient to absorb the current (and growing) labour force. In particular, concerns have been raised about youth unemployment, which was estimated at 50.3% for 14- to 24-year-olds and 29.5% for 25- to 35-year-olds in March 2006. Even though this figure constitutes a fall of about 2 percentage points from the previous year, it is worrying that there is still a significant number of young people who are unemployed and therefore vulnerable to poverty (CASE, 2007). Morrow et al. (2005: 10) estimated that one-third of all youth live in poverty, and approximately half of this one-third lives in extreme poverty. Almost two-thirds of youth in the aged 15-24 live in households with expenditure of less than R1 200 per month, as do approximately 60 per cent of youth aged 25-34 (Labour Force Survey, March 2007).

The literature on youth poverty in South Africa identifies two general causes – continuous reliance on poor households and unemployment (Morrow et al., 2005: 10). Poverty tends to reproduce itself among children and young people from already impoverished families. Conditions of poverty further hamper access to basic services for large numbers of young people living in poor households and constrain their ability to take up opportunities offered in the context of South Africa's social development approach. This policy therefore recognises the ways in which poverty caused by challenges relating to unemployment affects young people and suggests that government should work jointly with all key stakeholders, particularly the private sector in addressing backlogs in the labour market.

Unemployment turns to bring with it a number of social problems including: crime, drug and alcohol abuse, poor health and the loss of self-esteem and the confidence needed to participate in the broader society. Unemployed youth struggle to participate meaningfully in the economy and require assistance in dealing with the wide range of concerns and problems they experience in finding employment.

Taking into consideration the fact that the youth constitute the largest segment as compared to other population groups, their non participation in the economy of the country will definitely have serious negative consequences. Efforts at implementing employment and skills development programmes are ongoing as a means to ensure participation into labour market. This policy recognise the need to intensify the current interventions which seek to address youth unemployment by bringing other key role players across different sectors on board in order to jointly address this problem. This policy specifically targets the private sector by mobilising resources to support initiatives that seek to develop the youth. Central to this, are various initiatives such as the Youth Development Forum, Expanded Public Works Programme, AsgiSA, Jipsa which addresses youth unemployment. It is however crucial that these interventions are massified in terms of scale and impact, so that their coverage is extended to also address the employment needs of young people living in rural areas, and to also have a long lasting effects on the targeted youth population.

At present, although there are measures that address unemployment, they predominantly target skilled youth (those with matric and beyond). According to Statistics South Africa (2006), the nature of youth unemployment in South Africa, highlights that Africans, rural people, young women and youth under the age of 24 years (i.e. out of school youth) are most likely to be unemployed. This policy emphasises intensifying measures that will target these groups to enable them to participate in the social and economic mainstream. It is clear that such youth are more at risk if the challenges of unemployment and poverty are not addressed. If these youth are provided with second chance opportunities that appropriately support and encourage them they could become an asset to themselves, their families and society.

There is no reliable data on school-aged-out-of school youth due to the fluid nature of the lives of these youth and their reluctance to engage with authorities. However, these young women and men can be described as those who have dropped out of school prematurely and are unskilled. They are mostly unemployed since they do not have the starting qualifications. They have no adult supervision, have poor level of general welfare and well being and experience increased levels of stress. They are also exposed to high risk behaviour such as HIV infection, rape, alcohol and drug abuse, violence, exploitation, and often run a risk of being in conflict with the law. Although there is no specific data available, there are indication that these youth are found in variety of settings e.g. some are at home, some spend time on the streets although they still have contact with their families, some live full time on the streets to escape from their intolerable situations at home and or to survive, some hang out around the shops and shebeens etc. Since these youth lack basic literacy and numeracy, and are mostly unskilled, they remain marginalised from economy since