

South African Perspective

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Map of South Africa



Demographics

- South African population currently at 45-50 million people (last census)
- Predominantly young population
- 40% youth (category 14- 35yrs old)- Approx 70% unemployment rate
 - 0-13yrs constitute about 29,3%
 - 14-24yrs constitute about 22,1%
 - 25-35 yrs, constitute about 18,0%
 - 36+ occupy the remaining 30,5 %

Historical Context

- History of deep divisions
- ANC at the forefront of the struggle for liberation since 1912
- Political Youth Movements like the ANCYL established in the 1940s
- SAAYC established in the 1930s
- Major student and political youth movements banned over time beginning in the 1960s culminating in the 1980s
- Limited or no Government focus on youth work
- No government framework to guide interventions in the sector

Historical Context

- Youth work mainly the preserve of NGOs, FBOs, CBOs, youth movements, as well as student and civil society organisations, majority established in the early 1980s
- Major student uprisings of 1976
- International Youth Movements and providing support
- Birth of the UDF in 1983, complemented by SAYCO
- Young people mainly active in the political arena as part of struggle for a democratic dispensation

Historical Context

- This era deprived significant numbers of youth time and access to proper education and schooling
- Further deprived them of an opportunity to access critical skills
- Huge numbers of youth without secondary/tertiary education and appropriate skills
- Most youth and student movements unbanned in 1990
- Democracy attained in 1994
- 1st Youth conference in December 1995



"The youth of our country are a valued possession of our nation. Without them, there can be no reconstruction and development programme. Without them, there can be no future."

President Nelson Mandela
- May 1994 -

Post 1994 priorities

- Setting up institutional mechanisms
- Developing appropriate policy instruments
- Gearing government towards service provision to young people
- Developing partnerships with civil society
- Promoting better coordination and synergy amongst organs of government on youth matters
- Ensuring ongoing research development

Institutional Mechanisms

- 1996, National Youth Commission established (NYC), within the Office of the President, reporting to a Minister in the President's Office
- Led by a board and a CEO
- Provincial Youth Commissions(PYC)s established within the offices of the Provincial Premiers
- Youth focal point officers appointed in various departments of State
- In some cases youth officers were appointed in offices of local Mayors

Institutional Mechanisms

- The NYC and PYCs had a complex mandate, including:
 - National Youth Policy formulation
 - Implementation framework
 - Ensuring implementation at all spheres of government
 - Coordination with State Departments/Agencies and monitoring
 - Providing ongoing advice to government
 - Developing recommendations regarding the implementation of the provisions of the policy
 - Research Development

Institutional Mechanisms

- 2001 Umsobomvu Youth Fund(UYF) Established, responsible for, among others:
 - Providing entrepreneurial support and guidance
 - Skills development on entrepreneurship
 - Financial support
 - Information Provision
 - Career Counselling
- South African Youth Council(SAYC)-civil society umbrella body

Policy Provisions

- First Youth Policy completed in 1997
- Revised into a National Youth Policy Development framework(2002-2007)
- Response to the following challenges:
 - Poverty
 - Unemployment(70% unemployment amongst youth)
 - Health problems
 - Lack of skills, experience and opportunities
 - Crime and violence
 - Low education levels, lower numbers in tertiary sector
 - Limited access to information

Policy Provisions

- Areas of strategic intervention
 - Social well being
 - Education and training
 - Economic participation and empowerment
 - Justice and safety
 - Social mobilisation, capacity building and advocacy

Policy Provisions

- 2009-2014 Revised National Youth Policy
 - Education
 - Economic Participation
 - Health and Well Being
 - Social Cohesion and civic participation
 - National Youth Service
 - Youth Work

Programmatic Interventions

- National Youth Service Programme
- Local Government Programme (Partnership with the Flemish)- Local youth policy
- HIV/AIDS
- Life Skills
- Information Provision
- Young Prisoners Programme
- SETAs and Learnerships
- Inter Departmental Committee on Youth Affairs- coordinating departmental programmes on Youth

Youth Work

- Focusing on the holistic development of a young person (spiritual, emotional, social, political)
- Takes effect at community and grassroots level
- Identifies desired developmental outcomes of young people and determines practices that need to be in place to achieve them
- Could be considered more as a profession that requires a certain level of experience and qualification
- Could be formal or informal

Youth Work

- Previously predominantly practiced through FBOs (YMCA, Salvation Army, YWCA) and CBOs, student organisations, youth movements.
- No state involvement till post 1994
- Youth Work versus Social Work debate
- SAYWA launched in 1998, having started as an advocacy project of SAAYC in 1992, to focus on the following:

Youth Work

- To promote the recognition and professionalization of youth work
- Professional association of youth workers
- Support youth work activities towards strengthening of civil society
- Promote education, training and skills development in youth work
- Facilitate national and international networks of youth work
- Appraisal of the quality and standards of youth work involvement
- Promote and support research into youth work
- Support policy formulation processes

Youth Work

- Post 1994, gradual decline in youth activism
- Decline in the power and organisational capability of organised formations in youth work
- SAYC, SAYWA, SAAYC still in existence but weaker
- Collapse of some of the major youth organisations which were extremely influential, like JEP
- Political youth formations still active and strong in some cases
- State, through youth agencies like NYC and UYF, entered the youth work space
- FBOs, CBOs, NGOs still playing a major role in youth work, like SAAYC, RAG, SASVO, SLOT, ECYD, Jun Achievement, JEP

Youth Work

- Institutions of Higher Education provide academic training and qualifications
 - Huguenot (started in 1981), now part of the University of Stellenbosch, Theology Department
 - University of Port Elizabeth (offering a degree in Youth Work)
 - University of South Africa
 - University of Venda
 - Work supported by various research houses like HSRC, CASE, HEARD, Government Commissioned research.
- Some of these winding down due to low student enrolments
- Limited career options cited as one of the major challenges

Challenges

- Youth Work still fragmented, seen as competing at times
- Suffering from lack of proper coordination
- Still largely informal
- Lacks formal recognition and status
- To a large extent, not regulated nor monitored properly to allow for accountability and meeting of targets both nationally and internationally(eg MDGs)

Challenges

- Declining donor contribution and limited government funding
- Perception that it is only meant for unemployed Volunteers
- Experienced practitioners leaving the sector
- Limited career options
- Bringing the younger generation on board

The case for professionalization

- First Youth Policy in 1997 and subsequent policies made the case for professionalization, to:
 - Set minimum standards
 - Regulate the practice and registration with professional Councils
 - Provide systems to govern youth work
 - Provide minimum standards to qualify as a youth worker
 - Minimise the abuse of the practice, providing protection
 - Provide career paths and job opportunities to youth workers
 - Raise the profile of the practice
 - Formalising Youth Work

Critical Steps – Next Phase

- Finalise the professionalization process
- Strengthen Research in youth work
- Strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the country, with the Region and Internationally
- Strengthen the role of academic institutions and the courses they offer
- Develop a functional and strong relation between government and civil society
- Expand the funding base for youth work

Role of the State

- Facilitate the recognition of youth work as a profession
- Development of a regulatory framework
- To establish focal point officers in State Departments to ensure mainstreaming
- Ensure funding for youth development

Role of the State

- Conduct research to ensure evidence based decision making
- Framework for training and development as per SAQA
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Ongoing consultation with the Youth Sector
- Ensure the implementation of ALL Youth Policy Provisions

Recent Developments

- Youth Policy Revised
- National and Provincial Youth Commissions to close
- Umsobomvu Youth Fund to close
- Launch of the new National Youth Development Agency in June 2009
- Ministry of Youth, Women, Children and people with Disabilities established in May 2009
- Focus on Youth Clubs



Conclusion

We need to continually share experiences and lessons emerging from our youth work journey for the benefit of the young people we work with in our societies, whose lives we seek to develop

Thank you