Unpacking the Lived Realities of Western Cape Youth

Exploring the well-being of young people residing in five of the most deprived areas in the Western Cape Province
Executive summary, April 2018

This brief accompanies a research report of the Poverty and Inequality Initiative, University of Cape Town, in partnership with the Department of the Premier, Western Cape Government. The study aimed to contribute to a more nuanced body of evidence on young people's realities, and to help inform the provincial government's youth-related policies and interventions. The full report is at www.saldru.uct.ac.za, and the statistical data at https://youthexplorer.org.za.

Introduction

Recent youth development policies stress the need to intervene in several aspects of young people's lives, often strongly emphasising economic inclusion and empowerment, education, skills and training, health and social cohesion.[1]

Many existing policies draw on official statistics that point at the deficits in young people's lives. This tendency, albeit inadvertently, may lead to the de-personalisation of young people and the issues and topics they face. It also often results in a focus on the 'objective' aspects of well-being but overlooks the more 'subjective' areas of well-being: how young people feel generally, how safe or unsafe they experience life to be, their sense of life satisfaction, etc.

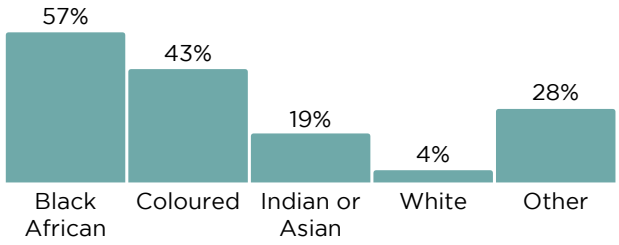
As a result, general policy recommendations may not be based on a complete understanding of young people's lived realities and may overlook their aspirations, dreams and agency. Effective implementation of youth development policies too requires this more comprehensive understanding.

In the Western Cape, the goal of the Provincial Youth Development Strategy (PYDS) is that, 'by the age of 25, youth in the Western Cape are inspired, educated, responsible, independent, healthy and productive citizens with positive personal, family and social relations'. The Western Cape Government (WCG) aims to reach this goal by focusing on five pillars: family foundations; education and training; economic opportunity; identity and belonging; and reconnection opportunities.

Aware of the need for a more comprehensive understanding of youth's realities, the WCG issued a call for a study that gathers, from young people's own viewpoints, a deeper understanding of their daily lives, including their aspirations, agency, and available support structures. The ultimate aim of this study was thus to begin to build a more nuanced body of evidence that could help inform the WCG's youth-related policies and interventions.

In conducting this work, it was important to avoid applying a 'blanket approach' to youth as this would mask the racial, gender and income inequalities that influence young people's lives and life chances. As shown in fig. 1 below, significantly more Black and Coloured WC youth (as elsewhere in the country) live in income-poor households than their Indian and White peers.[2] The WCG therefore requested a focus on some of the poorest wards in the province, and to include only Black and Coloured youth to allow for a focus on some the most vulnerable youth in the province.

Figure 1: Youth in income-poor households, by race, Census 2011.



Source: Poverty and Inequality Initiative (2017) *Youth Explorer*. PII, SALDRU, University of Cape Town.

The research also was deliberately designed to include young people from mixed gender, age and geographic groups. To avoid a blanket approach to youth in its broad age definition,[3] the WCG specifically asked to focus on youth aged 11 to 24 years. This also acknowledged the importance of adolescence as a critical stage for interventions that can lead to long-lasting change.[4]

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Methodology, scope and sample

The study made use of three methods:

1. A brief literature review of similar studies to give historical context to WC young people's life experiences; to distil, from their narratives, whether their experiences were improving or not; and to check the reliability and validity of this new study.
2. Developing and analysing indicators on youth well-being that were constructed by using Census 2011 and Community Survey 2016 data, and that are mapped on the Youth Explorer portal.[5] Data specific to the WC were analysed to reflect which 'domains' of well-being would require urgent attention to realise the PYDS aims.
3. Conducting focus group discussions (FGDs) with young men and women in the more deprived areas of the province. Youth Explorer data were used to determine these areas.

Fieldwork areas selected were in the Breede Valley, Stellenbosch and the Cape Town Metropolitan municipalities. Ten FGDs were conducted with a total of 25 young men and 32 young women aged 11 – 24 years.

Figure 2: Number and ward locations of focus group discussions (FGDs)

	No. of FDGs Age 11 – 15 years	No. of FDGs Age 16 – 19 years	No. of FDGs Age 20 – 24 years
Urban			
Khayelitsha, ward 89, isiXhosa	2		
Mitchells Plain, ward 82, Afrikaans		2	
Bishop Lavis, ward 24, Afrikaans			2
Rural			
Breede Valley, ward 18, isiXhosa		2	
Stellenbosch, ward 2, isiXhosa	2		

See fig. 5 on pp. 6 - 7 for an overview of the fieldwork areas in urban and rural wards.

All the FGDs were organised with the help of local community or youth-oriented non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Participants were divided by gender (male/female), and into three age groups: young adolescents, 11 – 15 years of age; youth, 16 – 19-year-olds; and older youth, 20 – 24 years. This assisted a greater understanding of their potentially very different needs, experiences and expectations.

This study sample was small and care should thus be taken not to present these data as representative of all youth in these communities, or in the province overall. However, the work provided useful, in-depth insight into the lived experiences of particularly vulnerable youth in the Western Cape. The full report discusses the challenges of fieldwork and limitations of the data.

Youth well-being and agency: What existing studies tell us

Studies[6] as far back as the 1990s have consistently indicated a great deal of resilience on the part of South African youth growing up in deprivation, but also the need for guidance and support in times when the situation becomes too complicated or dire to allow them to explore new options. The findings of the current study corroborate much of the evidence of the older studies and indicate that too little has changed in the lives of many of the province's youth.

Youth in the WC: What the Youth Explorer data tell us

In 2011, the WC had a population of 5 781 361 people[7], with 1 061 057 of those between 15 and 24 years old. Fig. 3 gives an overview of the demographics and well-being of these youth. The data show that:

Youth are disproportionately affected by poverty

Large numbers of young people in the WC, as elsewhere, clearly experience challenges across multiple aspects of their lives:

- More than four out of 10 young people (44.5%) aged 15 – 24 lived in households with a per capita monthly income of less than R779 (the 2015 'upper bound poverty line'[8]), compared to 33% of the adult population[9].
- Income poverty continues to be strongly associated with race[10] (as shown in fig. 1).

Many young people experience multiple forms of deprivation simultaneously

The Youth Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) captures the multiple deprivations experienced by young people[11] by tracking 11 indicators on education, health, living environment and economic opportunities.

The Youth Explorer data indicate:

- In 2011, 22.8% of the youth aged 15 – 24 in the WC were multidimensionally poor.[9] There are stark differences, however, across wards, pointing to spatial inequalities that persist within the youth cohort.
- Multidimensional poverty rates range from under 10% in city and suburban wards (shaded light green in fig. 4 on the next page) – eg, ward 59 in Cape Town's southern suburbs – to over 40% in parts of the south-eastern and northern areas of the province (wards shaded dark green) – eg, ward 2 in Breede Valley.
- A breakdown of the MPI shows that educational attainment (46.3%) and not being in any kind of education, employment or training (NEET) (20.1%) are the two largest contributors to multidimensional youth poverty in the WC. This shows an urgency to intervene in ways that would improve young people's educational outcomes and connections to the labour market.[13]

Key challenges and opportunities for intervention

Youth Explorer data point to the importance of improving literacy and numeracy levels for all, preventing school drop-out, and enabling access to higher education and training, as well connections between the worlds of school and work. Understanding and alleviating the heavy burdens of poverty and disease among young people are other areas that need to be addressed.

Schools

Increased access to education since 1994 has not resulted in increased employment. The poor quality of education in most public schools acts as a poverty trap. Poorer children in those schools very quickly fall behind, and such learning backlogs and grade repetition remain key drivers of school drop-out at a later age.[14] The Youth Explorer data indicate that, in the WC province:

- Overall, 74.5% of youth aged 16 – 17 have completed grade 9 or higher.[15] But in certain areas (eg, Langeberg, and Bergrivier) less than 55% reach this level.
- Many young people struggle to finish secondary schooling, and only 48% of youth aged 20 – 24 have completed matric or matric equivalent.[16]
- Major learning deficits are already substantial by the time learners reach grade 9. Only 22% of all WC learners passed the mathematics test, with an average mark of 34%; and only 53% passed the language test, with an average mark of 51%.[17]

Figure 3: Overview of youth in the Western Cape

Demographics	16.9%	total youth population	
		50%	male
		50%	female
Education	55.4%	aged 20–24 have completed matric or higher	
	20%	aged 16–17 deprived in education progress (less than grade 9)	
		23%	male
		16%	female
	40.9%	average mean score in grade 9 systemic tests	
	49.9%	average mean score in grade 9 English systemic test	
	31.8%	average mean score in grade 9 maths systemic test	
Poverty	44.5%	in income-poor households	
		43%	male
		46%	female
	22.8%	multidimensionally poor	
Economic opportunities	21%	deprived in household adult employment	
	32.6%	deprived in NEET	
	41.2%	youth unemployment rate	
Family & living environment	3%	deprived in electricity	
	1%	deprived in toilet facilities	
	1%	deprived in piped water	
	12.9%	deprived in formal dwelling type	
	23%	deprived in living with parents	
Health & wellness	25.6%	female that have given birth to a child	
	10%	age 16–19	
	40%	age 20–24	

Source: Poverty and Inequality Initiative (2017) *Youth Explorer*. PII, SALDRU, University of Cape Town.
Access at: https://youthexplorer.org.za.

There are extreme disparities at ward level in outcomes between learners attending school in affluent areas versus those attending schools in townships or informal settlements. Eg, only 7% of learners in New Crossroads passed the mathematics test in 2015, compared to 68.2% of learners at schools in Newlands.

Post-school education

A post-school qualification increases employment chances and earning potential; yet only 28% of WC youth aged 18 – 24 attend college or university.[18]

As in other parts of the country, the reasons for this include: a lack of access to information to make informed decisions about matric subjects or career paths;[19] low numbers of learners passing matric and qualifying for entry in higher education; difficult and costly applications to institutions because colleges and universities have their own application requirements; high tuition costs and other study-related expenses;[20] and alienating institutional cultures that contribute to drop out.

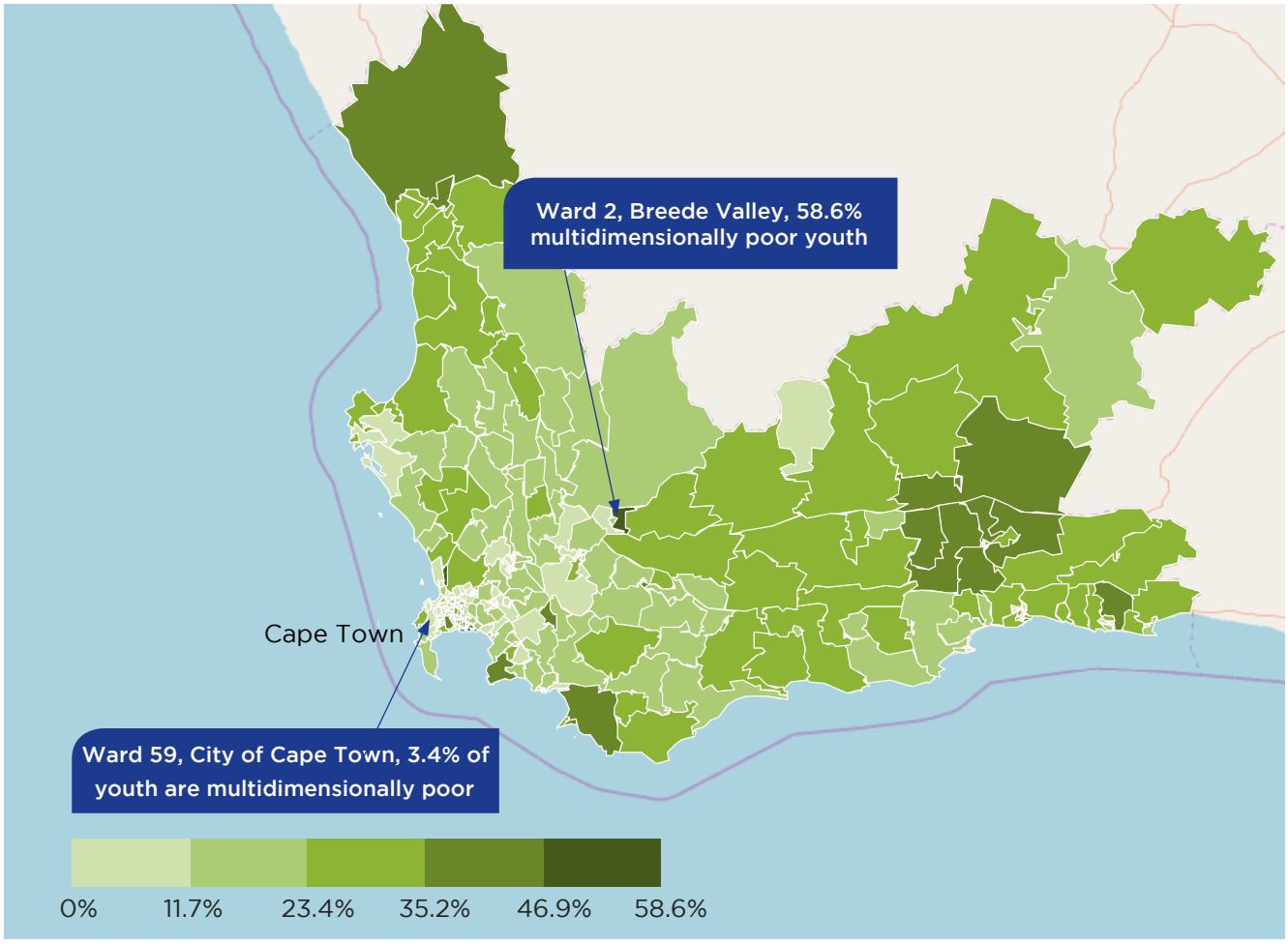
Drop-out rates in WC technical vocational and education and training (TVET) colleges are especially high: about three out of five students who register for the National Certificate (Vocational) examinations actually write them, while only 55% of them pass.[21]

Economic opportunities

Key drivers of youth unemployment are low educational outcomes and the structure of the labour market which gives preference to skilled and experienced job seekers with a post-school qualification. In the Western Cape:

- The unofficial unemployment rate for youth aged 15 – 24 increases to 52% if discouraged work-seekers are included.[22]
- Unemployment is highest for youth without a matric (47%) and lowest for those with any tertiary education and training (16%).[23]
- Unemployment is especially high for young people in the north-eastern parts of the province, where youth unemployment is well above 65% in some areas. Long distances to jobs and significant transport costs make it difficult for these youth to work.[24]
- 21% of youth live in households where no working-age adults are employed. This

Figure 4: Incidence of multidimensional youth poverty, by ward, Census 2011



Source: Poverty and Inequality Initiative (2017) *Youth Explorer*. PII, SALDRU, University of Cape Town. Access at: https://youthexplorer.org.za.

increases to 30 – 40% for youth in some of the townships or informal settlements in, eg, the Cape Town Metropole and in rural areas around Stellenbosch, Beaufort West and Langeberg. Such youth are likely to have limited exposure to the working world or to information about available jobs.[25]

- Slightly more females are NEET than males. Pockets with well above 40% of NEET youth are in urban areas such as Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain, and more remote areas like Prince Albert and Oudtshoorn.

Due to these barriers, young people are often faced with extended periods of joblessness and unsuccessful job searches during which they run the risk of depression and becoming discouraged and chronically unemployed.[26]

Health and wellness

Poverty is associated with experiences of social exclusion, heightened stress, violence and trauma, which all may increase risk and severity of mental illness, substance misuse and compromised access to care. Health data[27] on the Youth Explorer show that:

- Between 2010 – 2013, the top two causes of death among male youth (aged 15 – 24) in the WC were interpersonal violence (52%) and road injuries (12%).
- HIV (28%) and TB (13%) were the leading causes of death among female youth.

Youth well-being in the WC: Findings from the focus group discussions, and recommendations for the PYDS

The findings of the qualitative study, alongside the Youth Explorer data, indicate that the five provincial pillars to support youth development are well chosen. However, the FGD findings make it clear that the accessibility and implementation of existing programmes have several, sometimes severe, inefficiencies and gaps. This final section summarises the main issues described by the young participants, their suggested interventions or solutions, and the gaps that seem to exist in the PYDS and its current implementation.

Family and community life

Community life. All participants indicated a sense of unhappiness with life in their communities. They identified the main issues to be crime, violence, dirty and under-serviced areas; a lack of 'mentors' among the adults around them; a general lack of trust in the broader community; a sense of isolation and trauma; and a lack of easily accessible and reliable facilities. A lack of facilities that a) provide recreational opportunities; b) help them cope with their current situation; and/or c) can form bridges to a better future were mentioned in particular.

In all the FGDs, young people explained that many of the 'social ills' in their households or communities were caused by deep levels of deprivation which drive some to despair, substance abuse, gangsterism, transactional sex and suicide. Peer pressure, the lack of alternatives and of positive role models were described as other drivers of individual risk-taking.

> *I want us to live in a lovely, peaceful community, a place that people can be proud of. I don't want to stay in an unhappy place anymore* (Bishop Lavis young men, 20 – 24-year-olds)

In addition, the lack of safety in the community was mentioned by all. The fear of kidnapping, rape, mugging, gang violence and murder was expressed in all groups, and the young people again linked deprivation, crime and violence. While some asked for stronger police presence, others indicated distrust of the police. Several groups asked for a more decisive approach towards known criminals, drugs dealers, alcohol distribution and gangs in their neighbourhoods.

Recommendations

Implementing regular and stronger police presence in all the areas; creating a sense of trust and ethical cooperation between communities and police forces; holding perpetrators to account; implementing some of the criteria for 'safe cities'[28] (e.g. sufficient and working street lights, safety buttons); increasing employment opportunities and mitigating the effects of income poverty may begin to shift crime and violence. It is imperative to include solutions to increase safety and to mitigate the trauma of constant exposure to threat in the PYDS implementation plan: the knock-on effect of these on other desired outcomes, such as education and employment, is indisputable.

Family. While many described finding love, care and support at home, there were frequent mentions of parents not knowing how best to parent, or having turned to substance abuse and even exploiting their own children.

Figure 5: Geographic location of municipal wards included in the study and indicators on youth well-bei

Youth in Mitchells Plain – Ward 82		
Demo-graphics	19%	total youth population
	96%	race – coloured
	49%	male
	51%	female
Education	34%	aged 20–24 have completed matric or higher
	26%	aged 16–17 deprived in education progress (less than grade 9)
	33%	male
	20%	female
	33%	average mean score in grade 9 systemic tests
	47%	average mean score in grade 9 English systemic test
	20%	average mean score in grade 9 maths systemic test
Poverty	50%	in income-poor households
	50%	male
	51%	female
	28%	multidimensionally poor
	0.13	MPI
Economic opportunities	26%	deprived in household adult employment
	30%	youth deprived of employment
	49%	deprived in NEET
	58%	youth unemployment rate
	54%	male
	61%	female
Family & living environment	1%	deprived in electricity
	2%	deprived in toilet facilities
	1%	deprived in piped water
	8%	deprived in internet access
	68%	deprived in dwelling type
	18%	deprived in living with parents
Health & wellness	35%	female that have given birth to a child
	14%	age 16–19
	54%	age 20–24

Youth in Khayelitsha – Ward 89		
Demo-graphics	21%	total youth population
	99%	race – coloured
	48%	male
	52%	female
Education	36%	aged 20–24 have completed matric or higher
	28%	aged 16–17 deprived in education progress (less than grade 9)
	34%	male
	22%	female
	33%	average mean score in grade 9 systemic tests
	40%	average mean score in grade 9 English systemic test
	26%	average mean score in grade 9 maths systemic test
Poverty	68%	in income poor households
	64%	male
	72%	female
	50%	multidimensionally poor
	0.26	MPI
Economic opportunities	36%	deprived in household adult employment
	30%	youth deprived of employment
	45%	deprived in NEET
	64%	youth unemployment rate
	57%	male
	70%	female
Family & Living environment	40%	deprived in electricity
	27%	deprived in toilet facilities
	3%	deprived in piped water
	76%	deprived in internet access
	64%	deprived in dwelling type
	35%	deprived in living with parents
Health & wellness	32%	female that have given birth to a child
	13%	age 16–19
	45%	age 20–24

Youth in Bishop Lavis – Ward 24		
Demo-graphics	19%	total youth population
	92%	race – coloured
	50%	male
	50%	female
Education	37%	aged 20–24 have completed matric or higher
	23%	aged 16–17 deprived in education progress (less than grade 9)
	30%	male
	17%	female
	33%	average mean score in grade 9 systemic tests
	48%	average mean score in grade 9 English systemic test
	19%	average mean score in grade 9 maths systemic test
Poverty	53%	in income poor households
	51%	male
	56%	female
	27%	multidimensionally poor
	0.13	MPI
Economic opportunities	25%	deprived in household adult employment
	22%	youth deprived of employment
	43%	deprived in NEET
	47%	youth unemployment rate
	45%	male
	51%	female
Family & Living environment	9%	deprived in electricity
	5%	deprived in toilet facilities
	1%	deprived in piped water
	20%	deprived in internet access
	65%	deprived in dwelling type
	23%	deprived in living with parents
Health & wellness	31%	female that have given birth to a child
	12%	age 16–19
	48%	age 20–24

Source: Poverty and Inequality Initiative (2017) *Youth Explorer*. PII, SALDRU, University of Cape Town. Access at: https://youthexplorer.org.za.

ng for each ward.

Youth in Stellenbosch – Ward 2		
Demo-graphics	21%	total youth population
	63%	race – black
	51%	male
	49%	female
Education	27%	aged 20–24 have completed matric or higher
	40%	aged 16–17 deprived in education progress (less than grade 9)
	41%	male
	38%	female
	36%	average mean score in grade 9 systemic tests
	47%	average mean score in grade 9 English systemic test
	25%	average mean score in grade 9 maths systemic test
Poverty	57%	in income poor households
	51%	male
	63%	female
	50%	multidimensionally poor
	0.26	MPI
Economic opportunities	25%	deprived in household adult employment
	28%	youth deprived of employment
	44%	deprived in NEET
	48%	youth unemployment rate
	42%	male
	55%	female
Family & Living environment	17%	deprived in electricity
	6%	deprived in toilet facilities
	3%	deprived in piped water
	65%	deprived in internet access
	82%	deprived in dwelling type
	38%	deprived in living with parents
Health & wellness	45%	female that have given birth to a child
	21%	age 16–19
	60%	age 20–24

Youth in Breede Valley – Ward 18		
Demo-graphics	19%	total youth population
	57%	race – coloured
	50%	male
	50%	female
Education	33%	aged 20–24 have completed matric or higher
	34%	aged 16–17 deprived in education progress (less than grade 9)
	42%	male
	27%	female
	27%	average mean score in grade 9 systemic tests
	36%	average mean score in grade 9 English systemic test
	17%	average mean score in grade 9 maths systemic test
Poverty	60%	in income poor households
	60%	male
	60%	female
	19%	multidimensionally poor
	0.10	MPI
Economic opportunities	19%	deprived in household adult employment
	11%	youth deprived of employment
	25%	deprived in NEET
	22%	youth unemployment rate
	19%	male
	24%	female
Family & Living environment	5%	deprived in electricity
	4%	deprived in toilet facilities
	2%	deprived in piped water
	11%	deprived in internet access
	65%	deprived in dwelling type
	30%	deprived in living with parents
Health & wellness	35%	female that have given birth to a child
	18%	age 16–19
	53%	age 20–24

All participants spoke about high levels of stress within their families, even if they were considered supportive. Several mentioned that their mothers too did not always know where to find relevant information or how to help steer their lives in the right direction. Many spoke of caregivers working long hours away from home, leaving no time or energy to care or connect.

Recommendations

The WCG's emphasis on parenting support is warranted. However, in the context of parents needing to operate in heavily impoverished communities which affect their emotional well-being and capacities to parent, such support should be accessible to *all* and not only those who are considered 'dysfunctional'.

Also, such support should not be seen separate from interventions that provide material and financial support and further advice for parents to better guide their children. Many youth mentioned the financial constraints that lead parents to worry about providing food, transport money or educational support. Expanding access to well-trained professionals to deliver psycho-social support that helps families to develop coping strategies and access services is an imperative. Given constraints on public resources, the practical implementation of this will require collaboration across government departments, civil society and the private sector through a whole-of-society approach.

The self, and aspirations

All the issues faced at the family or community level were painted along high aspirations and wishes for a better life for themselves, their families and their communities. Most young people expressed aspirations towards a professional, stable life that would allow them an affluent lifestyle.

> **Interviewer:** *What does a good life look like?*
>
> **Participant:** *I don't want to think about what I'm going to be eating tonight or where the rent is going to come from... I've had that for, like, years.* (Bishop Lavis young women, 20 – 24-year-olds)

These wishes were not only driven by the desire for individual betterment, but also to bring about substantial change for their families and their communities and to alleviate the current levels of sorrow and deprivation. This was true for all participants, across gender, race and age. The older groups, however, indicated an understanding of how their structural constraints could hinder the fulfillment of their aspirations.

More rural groups referred to the isolation of their area as a possible barrier. In both Black and Coloured communities there was reference to peers who had given up wishing for a better life and who were now 'just waiting' to see change happen. How much of the latter was due to discouragement among young people or peer and community influence was not clear.

The PYDS sets itself the goal to ensure that the province's youth are 'inspired' (p. 33). The narratives of many of the youth indicate that, despite the effects of poverty, they have not lost their inspiration or ability to dream, and to picture for themselves and others around them a different and better life. Several participants (males and females of all ages) pointed out that 'you have a choice' as an individual not to engage in risky behaviour or crime.

It was, however, not always clear to what extent these youth really did manage to remain resilient in the face of peer pressure and multiple deprivations. They all had experienced very dire circumstances that could easily damage their belief in possibility.

Recommendations

The WCG needs to find ways to *pro-actively* reach out to all young people and, as the PYDS points out, to provide them with 'a sense of imminent possibility'. The pillars of education and economic opportunity play an important role therein, but so does the provision of facilities that give guidance and support.

Education

The PYDS sets itself the target 'to ensure that youth are literate, numerate and prepared for life and work' (p. 6).

Participants' narratives showed that, for some, school was a place of stability, safety and belonging. A number of learners were accessing fee-paying schools in an area that was a little further away from where they lived. They described receiving quality education with clear guidance from teachers and school management.

Among the majority of those who accessed schools in their immediate, more deprived areas, there was a general sense of gratefulness for access to fee-free schools and to the schools' nutrition programmes. Several groups spoke of

the positive impact of caring, supportive and engaged teachers and principals on their lives.

However, youth in more deprived schools also described situations that were utterly unconducive to learning. They spoke of disengaged teachers; the lack of basic amenities such as chairs and tables; unsafe and generally under-resourced schools; limited subject choices; and minimal or non-existent guidance on subject choice. Many of them were aware of the negative effect of this situation on their possibility for upward mobility, already hindered by poverty in many of their households.

> […] *well, if the kids want to go far in life and achieve their dreams; they can't do it without money. How are they going to get to university? Taxi fare? Everyday? And the 25th [pay day] is still far … and by the 15th the parents start worrying where the money for transport and taxi fare is going to come from, so they have to go borrow money from somewhere or someone.* (Bishop Lavis young men, 20 – 24-year-olds)

Recommendations

Placed alongside the Youth Explorer statistics, it is clear that the WCG needs to intervene urgently to rectify educational backlogs; thus to enable youth to reach their full educational potential. It is possible to consider a number of interventions that can begin to shift the situation for the better:

- *Improve the quality of teaching and learning for all.* The greatest efforts are clearly required in poorer areas, starting in the foundation phase or earlier, before learning deficits have grown to the current levels found in grade 9. WCG interventions exist in the form of various academic after-school programmes that focus on maths and English tuition in low-resourced schools. These include the Mass participation; Opportunity and access; Development and growth (MOD) Year Beyond programme and pilot programmes in the After School Game Changer. However, their impact is not yet clear.
- Based on participants' narratives, the following areas should be considered as priorities for stakeholders working to *improve the education system* in the Western Cape:
  - increased and dedicated support for teachers *and* school management working in less than optimal situations;
  - increased and better management of current resources for teaching, school management and educational equipment;
  - increased teacher knowledge of subjects, and on teaching methods;
  - increased subject choice;
  - instilled culture of pride and passion for the teaching profession that sees teachers abandoning practices that are simply harmful for their learners;
  - implemented and guarded regulations with regards to phone use in the classroom by teachers and learners; and
  - grown connections between communities, families and schools, and schools that truly function as safe spaces and are guidance hubs for children and youth.
- *Remediate the large learning backlog among the current cohort of high-school learners* who attend schools in less affluent areas. This is a big task, but is not impossible. There are indications of success by both small and larger-scale interventions such as the "AK Snapshots" Study Group[29] in Michells Plain and Ikamva Youth,[30] which runs peer-tutoring programmes in various communities across the country. There is, however, a lack of evidence on what kinds of interventions and approaches are most successful at the high-school level, in resource-poor settings, and at what scale. A review of national and international literature on existing programmes and their impact is thus needed.
- *Post-school opportunities* should be created by supporting youth to write and pass their matric exam and find access to higher education, or to *high-quality technical and vocational training* with a clear understanding of the pathways that education can offer them. For others it may be important to get access to work experience opportunities.
- *Continue to explore investing substantially in the college sector* to expand access to, and improve completion rates in, TVET. In addition, it is critical to strengthen links between the TVET sector and employers to ensure that education and training lead to actual employment.
- In 2016, the WCG launched the Apprenticeship Game Changer to create the necessary opportunities and pathways for individuals towards technical and vocational qualifications and employment. It will be important to *measure and understand the impact of the WCG's Apprenticeship Game Changer programme*

on young people's employment opportunities, and to adjust where necessary.

- *Clear and comprehensive career guidance* should be provided early in high school to assist subject choice and highlight post-school learning pathways and their relevance for upward social mobility. Provide the stepping stones that youth need to understand the route to their aspired futures.
- Understand the need to *provide comprehensive support* – including financial aid, academic and psycho-social support that can enable learners to stay the course.

Economic opportunities

Several of the older youth spoke about extended periods of joblessness and unsuccessful job searches, and therefore about the need for more 'opportunities'. This included the wish to gain work experience (even if unpaid voluntary work).

> *A lot of people don't know what to do after school, they just sit at home and it's not because we (are) dumb; it's because there's no opportunities, no doors that can open for us.* (Bishop Lavis young men, 20 – 24- year-olds)

The PYDS recognises the need for 'improved connections between youth and jobs and links to work experience' (p. 6). Central to its approach is a subsidised work programme, as well as job intermediation and facilitation of access to first jobs and, as mentioned earlier, connecting to pathways within or through the education system.

Recommendations

Many of the participants – both in the urban and rural areas – were not aware of any of the WCG's interventions. Thus, ensuring a sufficient number of interventions close to where these youth live would be an important intervention.

In addition, youth-targeted communication strategies could be more effective by differentiating and gearing them towards youth at particular crucial moments in their trajectories – eg while they are still at school, or as they turn 18 and exit the child support grant system, or when they receive their matric certificate.

Going beyond the suggested programmes in the PYDS is also important. The WCG and other stakeholders working in the youth development sector should continuously consider innovative support measures such as travel vouchers, saving schemes and better access to clear information that can help young people access jobs. Although not all of this is the mandate of the WCG, relevant departments have an important role to play to lobby national government in these areas.

Of course, the success of all these initiatives depends largely on the number of jobs that are available for young people in the province, and the required skills levels. Motivating employers, particularly those providing entry-level and low-skilled jobs, to increase their demand for youth employees is thus also important.

Lastly, but importantly, 'catering' for the bulk of young people who may *not* have written or passed their matric exams is an imperative to avoid the majority of youth sliding into a more vulnerable position. Here it is critical to ensure access to second-chance education, or to the TVET system where a matric qualification may not be a requirement to access opportunities for further learning.

The request for comprehensive support: prevention, protection and guidance

Many of the participants clearly felt restricted and hurt by deprivation and its effects on their environments, yet they managed to articulate what they thought would help them create better lives, including what initiatives they would like to see:

Prevention: Safe, clean and easy-to-reach recreational facilities

All participants asked for facilities where they could 'do something' after school and during other free times. This was also presented as an antidote to the lure of gangsterism, early sexual debut or substance abuse. The sense of isolation was great, especially (but not only) in the more rural areas.

Current recreational facilities were described as either too far away (and therefore expensive and unsafe to travel to); non-existent; not sustained; or not youth relevant. Girls and young women in all groups were adamant that sports facilities were almost entirely focused on young men and did not offer them a chance to practise sports in adequately safe and well-equipped spaces.

Leisure places like (safe) parks, gyms, swimming pools, cinemas, theatres, and malls were requested by all, as well as opportunities for further personal development.

Recommendations

Most young people did not feel that many options for safe, age- and gender-appropriate recreational activities are currently available. More attention needs to be paid to ensuring that both young and older youth, male and female, have easy access to places that allow them to experience fun and relaxed moments.

Protection, healing and mentoring

Alongside the need for recreational facilities was the request for facilities and services that are aimed at further prevention of harm, protection and healing from trauma. These include the presence of trustworthy and protective police forces, and facilities to help young people deal with the trauma they and their families experience daily.

> *Just imagine there's a place that I could actually go to for help. [...] for resources, where someone [will] take my hand.* (Bishop Lavis young women, 20 – 24-year-olds)

The need for easy access to a psychologist was mentioned more than once, for both young women and young men (and in some cases for parents). This was seen as an intervention that could both prevent further harm and risk behaviour, and that could help young people and caregivers decide on a better, more positive way forward.

Finally, there was a clear request for places or people that would provide reliable information and guidance on 'being young' in general, and more specifically on education, health, and jobs or internships. Importantly, youth asked for these to be offered without judgement but in a way that shows understanding of their situation. Young women especially pointed out how they could take up some of these roles by establishing what one referred to as a 'sisterhood' to provide emotional support, share experiences, knowledge and information that could counter the prevailing sense of rivalry and fragmentation in the community. They were, however, clear about their own limitations to knowledge about the educational system, and opportunities to gain experience or find work.

Recommendations

It is imperative for the WCG to find ways to protect young people better and to work with communities, caregivers and police to prevent further harm and trauma. In addition, it is important to support youth in their own agency, but also to connect them to that of others, such as mentors and role models, who can provide the additional knowledge that they require.

Multi-faceted character of the deprivations requires multi-faceted interventions

The quantitative and qualitative findings compellingly show that young people need support to deal with the multiple deprivations they experience in the different spheres of their lives. The barriers they may face in the one sphere intricately affect the opportunities they may have in the other.

> *Some girls [...] bunk school. Or [they] come to school but won't attend a certain class. Some sell their bodies because they have problems when they need money. Some parents support that [habit]. Maybe a girl [has] a* gweja *[derogative term for 'foreigner'] to get money her mother would say, 'My child bring back money from that* gweja *of yours'. Some parents do that.* (Langereef girls, 11 – 15-year-olds)

Recommendations

The consequence of these multiple, interacting deprivations is that gains made by one intervention are at risk of being wiped out by setbacks in another. It is therefore important that the complexities of these deprivations are reflected in interventions that the WCG designs. In other words, interventions should be able to address more than one issue at a time. The implementation of such a 'basket of inter-related services' need not only be the responsibility of the WCG, but may again require a whole-of-society approach that involves collaboration between various stakeholders.

To succeed in this undertaking requires one consolidated approach to youth development that can offer young people support and advice in the areas where they feel they need it the most. This consolidation needs to exist both physically, in a safe and nourishing space that is easily accessible to youth, and conceptually, in a basket of services or support that recognises that these various deprivations work *simultaneously* to constrain young people's lives.

Thus, a programme to 'provide parents with information about child development and teach skills to communicate and solve problems in non-violent ways'[31] may lead to a better understanding between parents and their adolescent youth. However, a single-faceted programme like this

will do little to alleviate the impact of the deep levels of income poverty on these households, or the low quality of education in under-resourced schools that are accessible to these young people.

Multi-faceted interventions have been shown to have stronger positive effects on young people's engagement in risk behaviour than single-focus interventions.[32] The ideal would be, then, to implement an intervention that helps young people identify the support they need and that connects them to a range of easily accessible and quality services.

In order to implement this kind of initiative, a thorough understanding of the available community resources is needed, as well as the design and maintenance of a centralised system of information. It would also require clear and efficient inter-governmental communication and alignment of programmes, as well as collaboration between civil society, government and private sector stakeholders.

The concept of the WCG's Youth Cafés[33] and partnership sites are both likely candidates to become the type of place that can offer multi-faceted support. However, for the WCG's goal to be met, many more of these partnership sites would be needed in all corners of the province to ensure they are accessible to young people and are adequately integrated into communities' social fabric.

Facilities such as the Youth Cafés or partnership sites would also need to be available for children at a younger age, and for all young people in the communities who feel they have a pressing issue they need help with. This may well be wide-ranging: from needing help with getting identity documents or birth certificates to issues of severe abuse in the family, to health questions, or hunger. The sensitivity of many of the issues young people deal with requires them to receive support in a context that safeguards their privacy and is non-judgmental. This will allow young people to really ask for the help they need.

While the partnership sites seem like a step in the right direction, they would need to be capacitated to engage *actively* with young people and with the particularities of neighbourhoods' needs. More generally, they need to be ready to support young people in voicing their aspirations and their needs; to take a genuine interest in youth; and to provide help, support and a roadmap for young people to reach the life *they aspire to*.

Notes: 1 The Presidency, RSA. 2015. *National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020: We Are Generation 2020. We Don't Want a Hand-Out, We Want a Hand Up!* Pretoria.; WC Government. 2013. *Western Cape Youth Development Strategy – 2013*. Cape Town.; City of Cape Town. 2013. *City of Cape Town Youth Development Policy*. Cape Town. 2 Using racial terms in South Africa is a sensitive and controversial issue as they are social constructs of the apartheid regime. It is, however, essential to recognise these historical constructs as they continue to carry important social meanings, and explain many of the remaining inequalities in the country. The terms 'Black' and 'Coloured' are therefore used in similar ways as, for instance, Stats SA does. 3 See no. 1. 4 World Health Organisation. 2014. *Health for the World's Adolescents: A Second Chance in the Second Decade.* Geneva.; 5 An online tool that maps indicators of youth well-being down to the small area level and makes these accessible to policy-makers and practitioners. Youth Explorer indicators are based on the 2011 national Census and, where available, data from the 2016 Community Survey. See: https://youthexplorer.org.za. 6 For an overview of the studies, see: De Lannoy, A., et al. 2018. *Unpacking the Lived Realities of Western Cape Youth. Exploring the Well-being of Young People Residing in Five of the most Deprived Areas in the Western Cape Province.* Cape Town: Department of the Premier, Western Cape Government & Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, UCT. 7 These numbers differ from those of Stats SA because they exclude people in 'Institutions, Transient and Tourist hotels'. The Community Survey 2016 Technical Report (Stats SA, p. 9) also clarifies that the CS 2016 did not collect data for this sub-population. A correct comparison is only possible between samples that both exclude the sub-population. This puts the total WC population at 6 279 730; the youth population increased to 1 062 917 in CS 2016. 8 R779 is the rand value, in 2011 prices, of Stats SA's rebased 2015 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. 9 Statistics South Africa. 2011. *Census*. Pretoria. [Analysis by PII, UCT] 10 See no. 9. 11 Frame, E., et al. 2016. *Measuring Multidimensional Poverty among Youth in South Africa at the Sub-national Level.* SALDRU Working Paper 169. Cape Town: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, UCT. 12 Frame, E., et al (2016) *Multidimensional Youth Poverty: Estimating the Youth MPI in South Africa at Ward Level.* Working Paper 189. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT. 13 See no. 12. 14 Van der Berg, S., et al. 2011. *Low Quality Education as a Poverty Trap.* Stellenbosch: SU. 15 Community Survey 2016 shows 80.4% of 16 to 17-year-olds had completed grade 9 or higher. 16 Community Survey 2016 indicates 55.4% of 20 to 24-year-olds had completed matric or matric equivalent. 17 WC Department of Education administrative data on systemic evaluations, matric successes and drop-outs for 2011/2017. 18 Community Survey 2016 shows only 25.3% of 18 to 24-year-olds are attending college or university. 19 Branson, N., et al. 2015. Post-school education: Broadening Alternative Pathways from School to Work. In: *South African Child Gauge 2015*. De Lannoy, A., et al. (eds.) Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT. 20 False Bay College. 2015. *Programme Fees 2015.* Viewed 15 Sept. 2015: www.falsebaycollege.co.za/images/file-downloads/FBC_Full_Time_Programme_Fees_2015_Low_Res.pdf.; UCT. 2015. *Student Fees 2015*. Viewed 15 July 2015: www.uct.ac.za/usr/finance/fees/fees2015.pdf. 21 Department of Higher Education and Training. 2014. *Statistics on Post-school Education and Training in South Africa: 2012.* Pretoria. 22 See no. 9. 23 See no. 9. 24 Graham, L., et al. 2015. Youth Unemployment in South Africa: Understanding the Challenge and Working on Solutions. In: *South African Child Gauge 2015.* In: De Lannoy, A., et al. (eds.) Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT. 25 Burns, J., et al. 2010. Social Networks, Employment and Worker Discouragement: Evidence from South Africa. *Labour Economics*, 17(2): 336–44. 26 See no. 24. 27 WC Department of Health administrative data on causes of deaths, pregnancy and delivery, 2005/2016. 28 The Economist. 2017. *Safe Cities Index.* Accessed at: http://safecities.economist.com. 29 More on the AK Snapshots on the Mitchells Plain Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/MPA.co.za/posts/10152391500612373 30 http://ikamvayouth.org/ 31 WC Government. 2013. *Western Cape Youth Development Strategy – 2013.* Cape Town. P. 37. 32 Banerjee, A., et al. 2015. A Multifaceted Program Causes Lasting Progress for the Very Poor: Evidence from 6 Countries. *Science*, 348 (6236): 1260799. 33 An initiative born out of the PYDP to give youth a platform where they can access skills and personal development training, economic and social development opportunities, and creative spaces. See www.westerncape.gov.za/youth-cafe.

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