BRITISH
COUNCIL

NEXT
GENERATION

LISTENING TO
THE VOICES OF
YOUNG PEOPLE

# CONTENTS

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**About Singizi Consulting Africa**
Singizi Consulting Africa is a research, monitoring and evaluation organisation
that specialises in studies in South Africa, the continent of Africa and globally. It
seeks to support learning about ways to realise change, with a focus on youth
and youth unemployment, vocational education and training, sexual and
reproductive health rights and human rights. Singizi uses a gender lens in its
research, and is committed to a participatory and developmental approach that
ensures that groups which are often marginalised, such as women, youth, sex
workers and LGBTQ people, have a voice.

The team members engaged in this research are: Carmel Marock and Candice
Harrison-Train from Singizi, who managed the research process and the report-
writing; Jan Schenk, Nqobile Bundwini and the ikapadata team, who completed
the household survey fieldwork; Mark Isserow, who supported the quantitative
analysis and reporting; Penny Foley, who supported aspects of the literature
review and qualitative fieldwork; and Anthony Gewer, who also contributed to
the literature review.

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Royal Charter and a UK public body.

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> **FOREWORD**

# > FOREWORD

It gives me particular pleasure to write the foreword for this publication in our *Next Generation* series. This is because several decades ago I was part of South Africa's then next generation, part of an opposition movement that sought political transformation through the achievement of a non-racial democracy, as well as social and economic justice for the country's disadvantaged and majority populations.

I was back in Britain when the world celebrated the swearing in of Nelson Mandela as the country's first democratically elected president and the birth of a rainbow nation. Nearly quarter of a century later, we know that the latter was a worthy but perhaps unrealistic aspiration and one that could not be achieved simply off the back of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, important and worthy though it was. This report highlights how long and difficult, and how often contradictory and disappointing protracted social change can be. In this, South Africa is no different from many other transitional and post-colonial societies.

The British Council's *Next Generation* research series investigates the attitudes and experiences of young people from a range of countries from across the world. It seeks to understand and give voice to young people, highlighting their concerns and aspirations and feeding these into contemporary policy and practice. The series currently focuses on countries under-going critical moments and how young people are affected by and are responding to current social, political and economic changes, whether these are national elections (e.g. Pakistan and Germany), conflict and post-conflict (Ukraine and the island of Ireland),

an historic peace accord (Colombia), demographic challenges (Tanzania and Kenya), or the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union.

South Africa shares the issue of demographic challenges. It also faces a critical moment in its recent history. As the research shows, the 'born free' generation - those coming of age in the post-Apartheid era - face multiple disadvantages. Not least among these are limited work opportunities in the context of an economy that has fallen below its potential over the last two decades. In addition to economic hardship, they have fallen prey to other unfulfilled promises: The issues raised by the former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela in her widely covered *State of Capture* report in late 2016 and allegations of corruption and scandals at the highest level. In response, South Africa's youth voice was heard in the #RhodesMustFall campaign, honing in on issues of both race and identity, as well as the affordability of education in the #FeesMustFall campaign.

Young people are disappointed and even angry, but they are also proud of their country's diversity, dynamism and democracy. The young voices that come through in this research are illustrations of courage, tenacity and optimism. They seek debate, participation and engagement, including with government actors. They take responsibility for their own futures and believe they have something to offer the social transformation to which they aspire.

It is not surprising that young people have a deep interest in the future – it is theirs. We owe it to them to listen, to respond to the challenges they identify and to help empower them to inform the practice that will shape their prospects and the state of world that lies ahead of them. We at the British Council are committed to contribute in some small way to working with policy makers and young people to secure the prosperous and peaceful future for which all South Africans yearn.

— *Professor Jo Beall,* FAcSS, FRSA
Director Education and Society
**British Council**

# > FOREWORD

South Africa's population is largely made up of millennials with around 66% being 35 years and younger. And yes, it's true – we are disillusioned by the 28 years of democracy as we look towards our government who continue to make unfulfilled promises for youth employment and opportunities. We may not have witnessed the unruly injustice of Apartheid firsthand but we most certainly endure the burden of its aftermath. Our struggle may be different but nevertheless, we have a struggle for opportunities.

The rise in activism in the youth movements, #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, show a people still not willing to settle for less. I believe it is thanks to the resilient youth protests that an entire nation stands together to speak out and call for the resignation of the former president.

This report reveals that my peers and I want to take our destiny into our own hands. We want to be owners and climb the ladder of opportunity and to succeed. It is up to us, we have to play a role in politics and use our collective voice to effect meaningful change. We ask for a chance to stand on your shoulders.  When young people can claim their right to health, education and decent working conditions, we become a powerful force for economic development and affirmative change.

Currently, South Africa is under-going a critical phase and we are hopeful that we are on the verge of political transformation and reconciliation. With a new President and his cabinet rejuvenated, hopes are high that this time government will work with us to be active agents of change. Working together with and for the people; we hope to see our economy improve, the creation of more jobs and access to quality educational.

From my perspective, future of South Africa's youth is bright. However, the past teaches us not to count our eggs before they hatch – so we're hopeful but we're waiting to see.

— *Sibulele Mguga* is a Marketing and Communications Assistant, 24 years old and from Cape Town. **He is part of the British Council team directing this project.**

# > SUMMARY

Over the past few years South Africa has witnessed fierce struggles waged by and among multiple communities. We have seen dramatic images of students pitted against universities demanding that #FeesMustFall, as well as of young people participating in service delivery protests and in marches for jobs. The Next Generation South Africa research – focusing on South Africans between the ages of 15 and 34 – aims to provide a window into their world.

It provides a narrative of young people whose lives are limited by multiple disadvantages: socio-economic and geographic factors, as well as racism and sexism. However, this research also investigates the ways in which young people navigate these issues to achieve their goals. Next Generation South Africa illustrates the extent to which young people – even when faced with adversity – have a sense of agency and optimism. It shows that while they may be asking others to play their part, South African youth recognise their own individual responsibility for change.

Young people choose to be involved, and seek to work in their communities – together with other role players, such as the government – to transform them. In addition, the report examines the information, resources and networks that young people want and need to enable their transition into adulthood and independence, and to optimise their potential.

# > INTRODUCTION

## 1. About Next Generation

The Next Generation series focuses on the attitudes and aspirations of young people, and the policies and conditions that support them in becoming creative, fulfilled and active citizens. This includes exploring their views on education and employment, their daily lives and networks, their hopes and fears for their country, their degree of international engagement and views on the wider world, and the values and beliefs that drive them.

Research is initiated in countries that are experiencing a period of significant change, with the purpose of ensuring that young people's voices are heard and their interests properly represented in decisions that will have lasting implications for their lives.

## 2. Next Generation South Africa

On 27 April 1994, South Africa held its first democratic election after the dissolution of the Apartheid state. This was the first election in which citizens of all races were allowed to take part. The African National Congress's ascendency under Nelson Mandela brought new hope to millions of South Africans. Yet 23 years later, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. The total net wealth of just three billionaires in South Africa is equivalent to that of the bottom 50 per cent of the country's population.[1]

While access to education has greatly increased during this period, young people in South Africa struggle to access economic opportunities. In 2016, 66 per cent of people between the ages of 15 to 24 were unemployed; the unemployment rate for those aged 25 to 34 was 41 per cent. This constrains the ability of many young people to successfully transition into independence and adulthood. Thus, while a large proportion of young people in South Africa were born after May 1994 – and are known as South Africa's 'born-frees' – this is a misnomer for many young people. Honwana[2] argues that if young people cannot access jobs, they remain in a suspended state where there is a lack of equity and an absence of many freedoms. She argues that this requires young people to be creative and 'improvise livelihoods and conduct their personal relations outside of dominant economic and familial frameworks'. However, what is also evident from this research is that even where young people have the resilience to make it happen, transitioning successfully requires an ecosystem that can provide the resources and environment to support young people.

The South African National Youth Policy (2015–2020) opens with the statement 'youth-targeted interventions are needed to enable young South Africans to actively participate and engage in society and the economy. The marginalisation of young people is primarily manifested in high youth unemployment' (April 2015). This highlights that for young South Africans, the priority issue is how to access the economy.

It is in this context that Next Generation South Africa sought to understand the thoughts, opinions and circumstances of young South Africans, most of whom have been raised in this young democracy. Have the members of this young generation, who have entered – or are just entering – adulthood in post-Apartheid South Africa, inherited a world different to that of their parents, or do they continue to bear much of the legacy of older generations?

# > METHODOLOGY

## 3. Methodology adopted

The methodology developed for the research included the following areas.

### Reference group
The British Council convened a reference group of key players from government, business, development agencies and young people themselves. During the period of the research, the reference group met twice. These meetings served to guide the research process, and to reflect on the findings.

### Literature review on youth in South Africa
The literature review provided an overview of young people in South Africa. This included demographic data, including economic status, migration patterns and educational levels. Data from various Statistics South Africa surveys enabled the research team to locate the findings within the national picture. This was augmented by literature on youth in South Africa, including published research, as well as policy research that has been undertaken. Much can be described as grey literature and has not been published. This report also draws on evaluative research that focuses on the insights gained about youth in the course of implementing interventions to enable young people to access employment. The team has also reviewed the policies that have been put in place to meet the needs of young people in South Africa.

In reviewing this literature, Singizi sought to understand the attitudes and behaviours of young people with regards to: (i) personal aspirations, and what youth need from the education system and their local communities to achieve their ambitions; (ii) their behaviour and attitudes in relation to education and training; (iii) their behaviour and attitudes in relation to entrepreneurship and formal employment; (iv) their definition of the kinds of skills they think will be required for their future careers and the world of work in South Africa; and (v) their perceptions of the barriers to success. The review was initially

presented to the reference group. It has since been revised, and has been integrated into this report.

### Youth survey
The Next Generation survey was targeted at youth between the ages of 15 and 34 living in South Africa. It took the form of a structured questionnaire that used a combination of single and multi-mention closed questions, with a few open-ended questions. As well as demographics, it covered issues such as perceptions of education and the world of work, perceptions of culture and tradition, questions pertaining to crime, violence and substance abuse, personal agency, lifestyle, volunteering behaviour, interest in politics and perceptions of other countries in Africa, as well as other countries across the globe.

The survey was administered as a door-to-door household survey in the four most youth-populous provinces in South Africa (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Western Cape). The residential enumeration areas were randomly selected, proportional to each province's size (based on the number of households per province), and stratified by locality (urban/rural). Within each household, the respondent was randomly selected using a random-number gene-rator built into the digital questionnaire.

The data collection process was managed by iKapadata, with oversight from Singizi. IKapadata specialises in mobile data collection using smart-phones and tablets, as opposed to pen and paper. Mobile data collection has many advantages: it is faster and more accurate, as it eliminates secondary data capture; it suffers less from data entry errors; and it enables real-time data validation. All of the data collected were carefully quality-controlled. The data were cleaned and analysed, and are represented in this report.

### Qualitative research
Singizi facilitated four focus group discussions with young people.

These were administered at different points in the process. The first set of focus groups were used to inform the survey instrument, while the second set of focus group discussions sought to consider the key findings emerging from the survey, and to discuss these in more depth.

In addition to the above, a number of leaders and influencers in the youth sector were interviewed. Many of these individuals were also members of the reference group; thus they also contributed as part of the collective discussion. These included a respondent from the National Youth Development Agency, officials responsible for youth-related issues in the Presidency and other key government departments (including the Treasury, Department of Social Development and the Department of Economic Development). In addition, members of the National Planning Commission and respondents from selected foundations were interviewed. The interviews reflected on existing youth policies, and suggestions for new policies, as well as perceptions on structures that support youth in South Africa, implementation against policy to date, and the key successes and challenges in this regard.

This report reflects on the details of the young people that participated in the survey, and integrates the views of youth leaders and other key players to provide additional insights into these findings. It also draws on national data and research to allow for an understanding of the extent to which the Next Generation sample is consistent with the population nationally, as well as to compare the findings emerging from this survey with previous research. Finally, the report considers the extent to which these findings suggest that existing policies and programmes are aligned with the expressed needs of young people.

*Note that there are instances where rounding of percentages results in sums that are slightly above or below 100 per cent.*

# 4. A look at the survey sample

This section provides an overview of the sample of young people who completed the Next Generation survey. There was a total of 1,474 respondents.

**Figure 1: Age categories of respondents**



| 34% | 26% | 20% | 20% |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 - 19 years | 20 - 24 years | 25 - 29 years | 30 - 34 years |
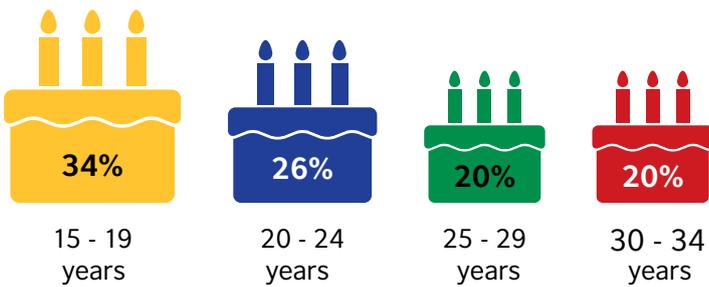
The sample was constituted as follows in terms of race:[5]

**Figure 2: An overview of the sample by race**



- 0.2%
- 10.1%
- 2.1%
- 5.3%
- 82.2%

- 🟥 Black African
- 🟨 White
- 🟦 Coloured
- ⬛ Other
- 🟩 Indian/Asian
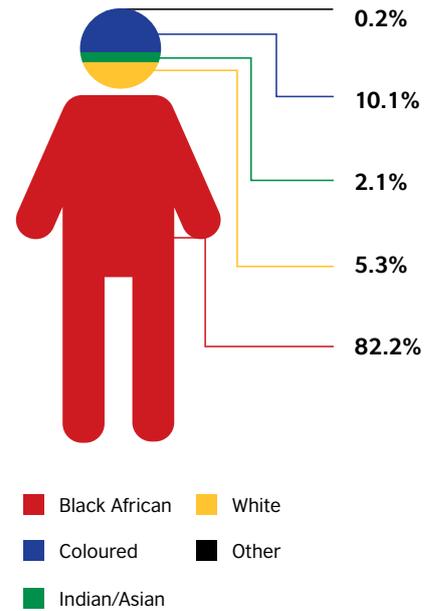
The figures highlights that black African youth constitute 82.2 per cent of the sample, so-called "coloured" youth 10.1 per cent, white youth 5.3 per cent and Indian/Asian youth 2.1 per cent. These figures are roughly congruent with the Statistics South Africa General Household Survey (2015), where for the cohort 15–34, black African people constitute 83.26 per cent, coloured people 8.25 per cent, white people 5.95 per cent and Indian/Asian people 2.27 per cent. This is important, as these figures represent the population distribution by race and age cohort for the entire country, while the sample is limited to the four provinces of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Western Cape.[6]

All racial groups were surveyed in three of the provinces, while in Limpopo the sample was constituted of black African young people only.

**Figure 3
Percentage of sample size by province**



- Limpopo
- Gauteng
- KwaZulu-Natal **31%**
- **36%**
- Western Cape
- **17%**
- **16%**

**Figure 4: Average age by province and race in sample**

| | Gauteng | KwaZulu-Natal | Limpopo | Western Cape |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black African | 24.6 | 22.46 | 22.67 | 24.9 |
| White | 23.6 | 21.7 | | 22 |
| Indian/Asian | 29 | 23.18 | | 27 |
| Coloured | 20.86 | 21.97 | | 22.29 |
| Total | 24.35 | 22.33 | 22.67 | 24.05 |

Aside from the rural areas of Gauteng, where 70 per cent of the sample is male, the male-to-female proportions were very similar.

Male    Female

**Figure 5: Male/female by rural/urban in sample**

| | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gauteng Rural | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gauteng Urban | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KwaZulu-Natal Rural | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KwaZulu-Natal Urban | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Limpopo Rural | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Limpopo Urban | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Western Cape Rural | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Western Cape Urban | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | |

# > DEMOGRAPHICS

## 5. Youth population

A review of young people in South Africa between 2009 and 2014 illustrates that the youth population in South Africa grew from 18.5 million to 19.6 million of a total population of 53.7 million. In other words, the youth population grew by six per cent over a five-year period. This suggests that the country is currently experiencing a youth bulge. This is often described as a demographic dividend that could potentially propel the economy and the country onto a new growth trajectory.[7] As of 2017, young people constituted 36.5 per cent of the total South African population.[8]

As can be seen in Table 1, the highest numbers of youth are located in the populous provinces of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, followed by the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Western Cape. Youth comprise between 34 per cent and 39 per cent of the total population in each province. These figures assisted to determine which provinces to sample for this survey.

**Table 1: Youth by province[9]**

| | Number of to 15-34-year-olds | Percentage of total population in province |
|---|---|---|
| Eastern Cape | 2,624,433 | 38% |
| Free State | 1,058,947 | 37% |
| Gauteng | 4,583,149 | 34% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 4,049,185 | 37% |
| Limpopo | 2,245,841 | 39% |
| Mpumalanga | 1,664,658 | 38% |
| North West | 1,349,550 | 36% |
| Northern Cape | 435,204 | 36% |
| Western Cape | 2,131,040 | 34% |
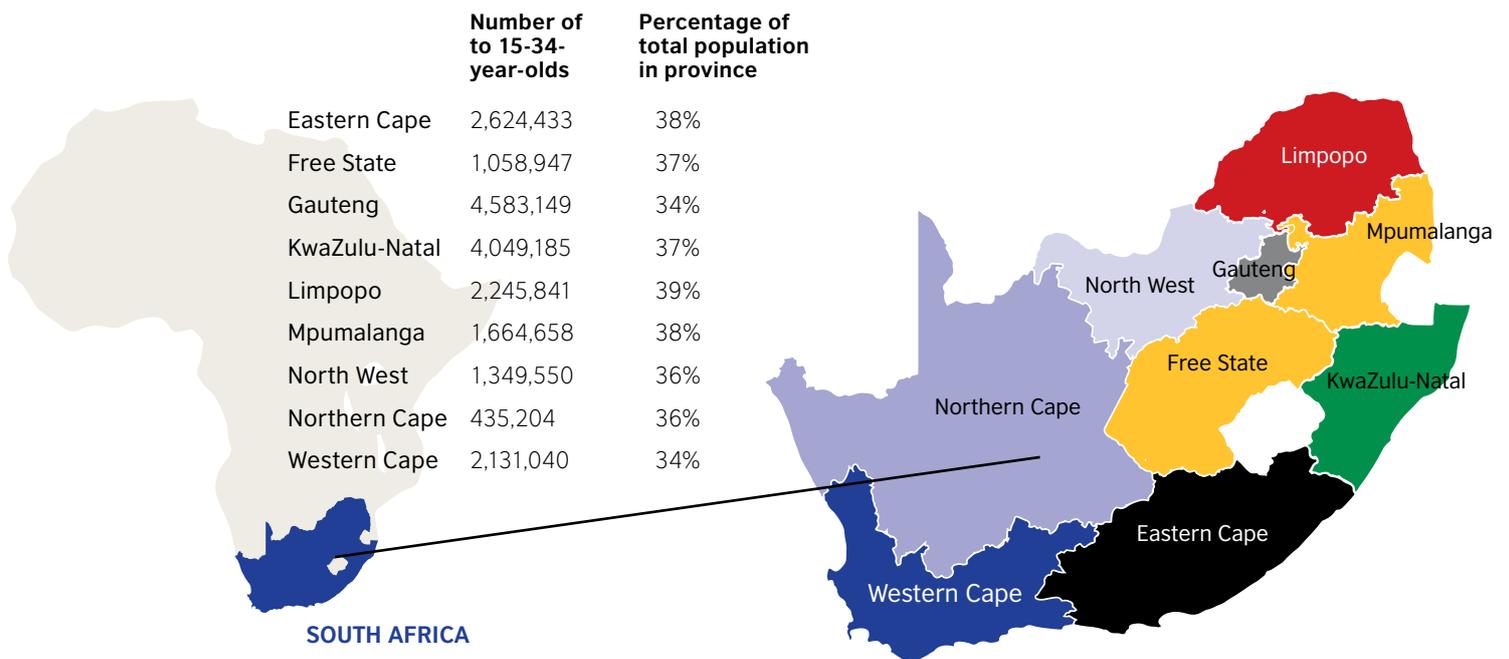


## 6. Youth mobility

One of the characteristics of young people in South Africa is that they are associated with high levels of migration. The data presented below highlights the extent of youth migration in South Africa. It shows large youth net migration losses suffered in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo (which are more rural provinces), and captures Gauteng and the Western Cape's (more urban provinces) youth net migration gains.

**Table 2: Inward migration, outward migration and net migration by province. Statistics South Africa, Census, 2011**

| Province | Outward migration | Inward migration | Net migration |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eastern Cape | 953,100 | 133,968 | -819,132 |
| Free State | 237,297 | 134,892 | -102,405 |
| Gauteng | 309,309 | 2,455,398 | 2,146,089 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 451,056 | 324,201 | -126,855 |
| Limpopo | 792,651 | 210,024 | -582,627 |
| Mpumalanga | 303,516 | 321,030 | 17,514 |
| North West | 245,934 | 298,563 | 52,629 |
| Northern Cape | 121,116 | 65,640 | -55,476 |
| Western Cape | 123,057 | 724,944 | 601,887 |

These increased levels of urbanisation are reflected in the sample in this survey, where it can be seen that – based on a random selection of enumerator areas (as discussed in the methodology) – most young people in the sample are from urban areas.

**Figure 6: Rural/urban composition of the sample**
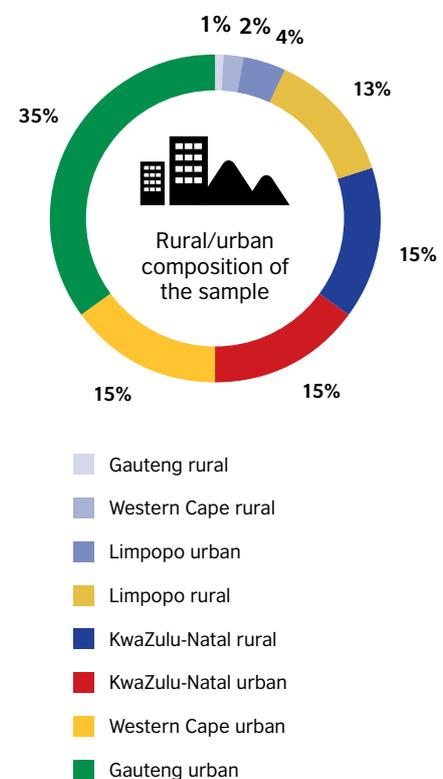


The figure above highlights that the greatest proportion of respondents reside in urban areas in Gauteng. KwaZulu-Natal urban, Western Cape urban and KwaZulu-Natal rural areas constitute 45 per cent total of the sample. Limpopo rural and urban combined constitutes only 17 per cent of the sample size. Further, the sample reinforces the extent to which young people are mobile.

Interestingly, the findings of this survey highlight that the 28 per cent of respondents who moved as adults have improved their household circumstances. Of the respondents who had a member of the household receive a grant[10] in their childhood home, 54 per cent report this has changed (they no longer receive the grant). Of those who were once reliant on sources outside the home to access water, 68 per cent now report they have running water available on their

property. Of those that did not have access to government-supplied electricity in their childhood home, 76 per cent now do.

This section has touched on some of the trends with respect to youth migration and then located the findings of the survey within this context. Section 8 offers an analysis of the reasons for this migration and the extent to which it is resulting in improved socio-economic circumstances of young people.

# 7. Education and work status

This section provides an overview of the situation for young people in South Africa with regards to education levels and access to economic opportunities (employment and self-employment). The Next Generation survey findings are then located within this context, and the concluding discussion within this section explores the implications of these findings in more depth, taking into account the research that has been undertaken in this field.

### 7.1. Education levels

Only about 47 per cent of 22- to 25-year-olds in the country have completed Grade 12, compared to 70 per cent in most developing countries.[11] Furthermore, while the national pass rate for the National Senior Certificate examination increased from 70.7 per cent in 2015 to 72.5 per cent in 2016, in four provinces (the Western Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the Northern Cape) the pass rate decreased over this period. The Eastern Cape was the worst performing province, attaining a pass rate of 63.3 per cent.[12]

Since the establishment of the Department of Higher Education and Training in 2009, there has been a concentrated effort on expanding access to post-schooling education and training. The table below reveals that significant gains have been made in increasing enrolment figures in the post-school system. At the same time, the number of young people – the majority aged between 18 and 24 – who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is estimated to be over three million.

**Table 3: Number of individuals enrolled in the post-school system 2010–14 (millions)[13]**

|  | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|
| University (public and private) | 0.89 | 0.95 | 0.97 |
| Colleges (public and private) | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.70 |
| Adult education (public and private) | 0.29 | 0.31 | 0.26 |
| Not in education, employment or training (NEET) | 2.78 | 2.95 | 3.00 |

A disaggregation of the university data in terms of race finds that in 1993, 52 per cent of the higher education student body was black. In 2009, of the 837,0000 students in the university system, 78 per cent were black, demonstrating advances in equity on the whole. However, although overall enrolments in higher education have increased since 1993, 'the gross participation rate of black, and especially African and coloured South Africans, continues to be considerably lower than for white South Africans'.[14]

**Table 4: Department of Higher Education and Training, Higher Education Management Information System data**

|  | Number of Students | | Percentage of Students | | Growth Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 |
| African | 317998 | 595963 | 57.75% | 67.18% | 6.48% |
| Coloured | 30106 | 58219 | 5.47% | 5.56% | 6.82% |
| Indian | 39558 | 54537 | 7.18% | 6.15% | 3.26% |
| White | 163004 | 178346 | 29.60% | 20.11% | 0.90% |
| TOTAL | 550666 | 887065 | 100.00% | 100.00% | 4.88% |

**Figure 7: Highest education levels (all respondents) and 'current education levels' (for those still studying)**
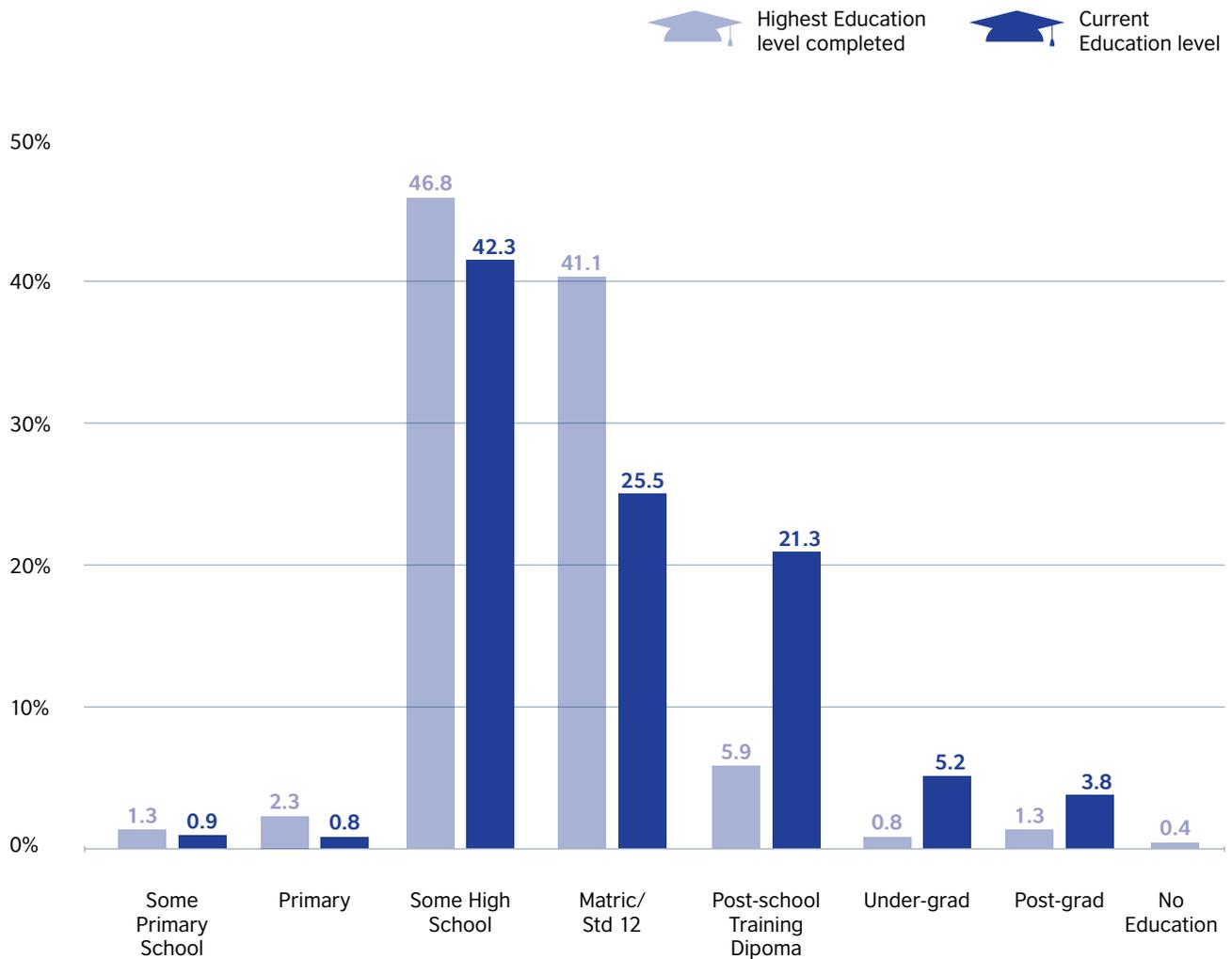


A review of the education levels of the young people in the survey finds that the sample is constituted in Figure 8.

This figure illustrates that 41.1 per cent of the sample has matriculation as their highest level of qualification, though the greatest proportion – 46.8 per cent of respondents – said they had 'some high school' as their highest qualification. Slightly more than one in five hold a post-school diploma or trading certificate.[1]

**Figure 8: Highest education levels by race**

| | Black African | White | Indian/Asian | Coloured |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| None | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| Some Primary School | 1% | 0% | 3% | 3% |
| Primary | 2% | 4% | 3% | 3% |
| Some High School | 47% | 40% | 34% | 55% |
| Martic/Std 12 | 43% | 37% | 41% | 30% |
| Post School | 6% | 6% | 10% | 7% |
| Under Grad | 0% | 6% | 3% | 0% |
| Post Grad | 1% | 5% | 3% | 1% |

Reviewing education levels by highest education levels to date by race, white and Indian/Asian people have the highest percentages of young people with postgraduate and undergraduate qualifications. Black African and coloured groups have the highest proportions of young people with only some high school.

Later in this report we will examine attitudes towards education.

### 7.2  Employment

A review of national figures from Statistics South Africa finds that the unemployment rate and the expanded unemployment rate (i.e. that the individual has not looked for employment for six weeks or more) were 45 per cent and 55 per cent respectively for 15- to 24-year-olds in 2008, and that these rates rose to 54 per cent and 66 per cent respectively by 2016. For the 25- to 34-year-old cohort, the figures were 25 per cent and 31 per cent for the unemployment rate, and expanded unemployment rate, in 2008. This had increased to 31 per cent and 41 per cent respectively by 2016. This suggests that even within the broader youth category, it is more difficult for the younger cohort is to access work.

It is important to note that within the youth population there are young people who are substantially more disadvantaged than their counterparts

1 >  This is the highest qualification awarded at the end of high school. (at grade 12)

in their ability to access the economy. The NEET rate for black African youth is three times higher than that of white youth. Similarly, young women face higher NEET rates than male youth.[15] Interestingly, 36 per cent of unemployed males and 40 per cent of unemployed females have attained a matriculation-level education.[16] By contrast, the importance of participation in higher education is demonstrated by the reality that a review of the national data pertaining to education and employment levels in South Africa suggests that most unemployed youth have less than a matriculation certificate. Only a relatively small proportion of young unemployed individuals are graduates, or individuals with tertiary qualifications.

Figure 9 highlights the spread of youth across various education and employment statuses.

**Figure 9: Employment status**
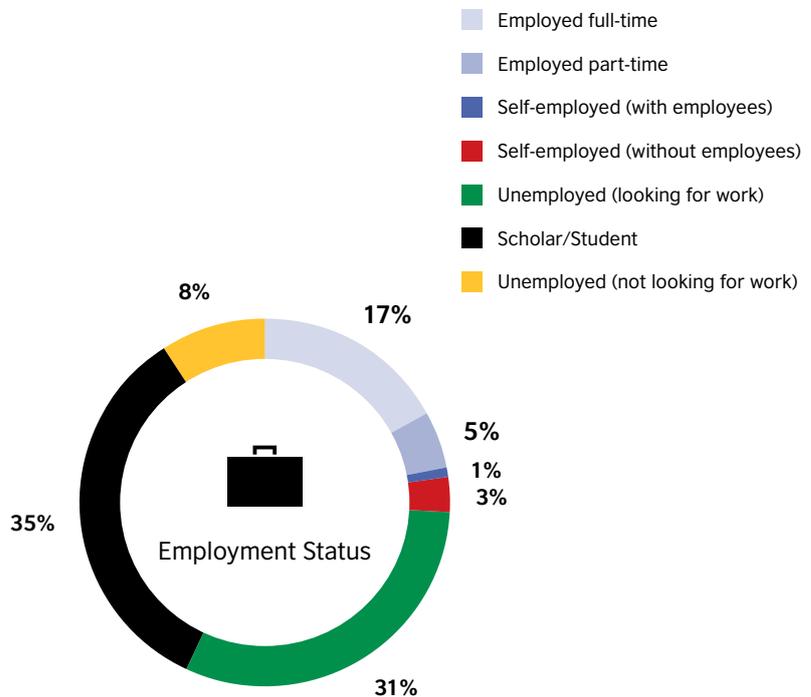


A review of this survey data in terms of these age cohorts is as follows:

**Figure 10: Employment status by age**

| | 15 - 19 years | 20- 24 years | 25 - 29 years | 30 - 34 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unemployed | 10% | 37% | 28% | 25% |
| Student | 76% | 21% | 2% | 1% |
| Self Employed | 10% | 12% | 41% | 37% |
| Employed | 4% | 23% | 35% | 39% |
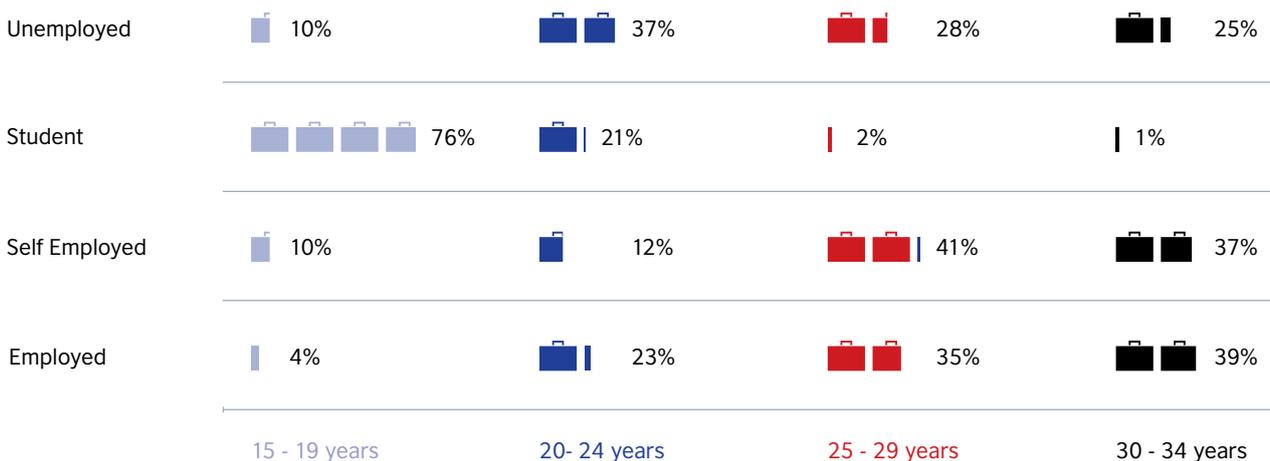
As anticipated, the majority of scholars/students are in the cohorts 15–19 years and 20–24 years. Those who are employed are 20 years and above. Those who are self-employed tend to be older (25 to 34 years). The levels of unemployment are highest for those between 20 and 24 years, but nonetheless remain high for those 25 and older. This trend is consistent with the national pattern, albeit that national unemployment figures are higher than those in this survey. A disaggregation of this for the provinces is found in Figure 11.

**Figure 11: Employment status by province combined)**

| | 15 - 19 years | 20- 24 years | 25 - 29 years | 30 - 34 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unemployed | 10% | 37% | 28% | 25% |
| Student | 76% | 21% | 2% | 1% |
| Self Employed | 10% | 12% | 41% | 37% |
| Employed | 4% | 23% | 35% | 39% |
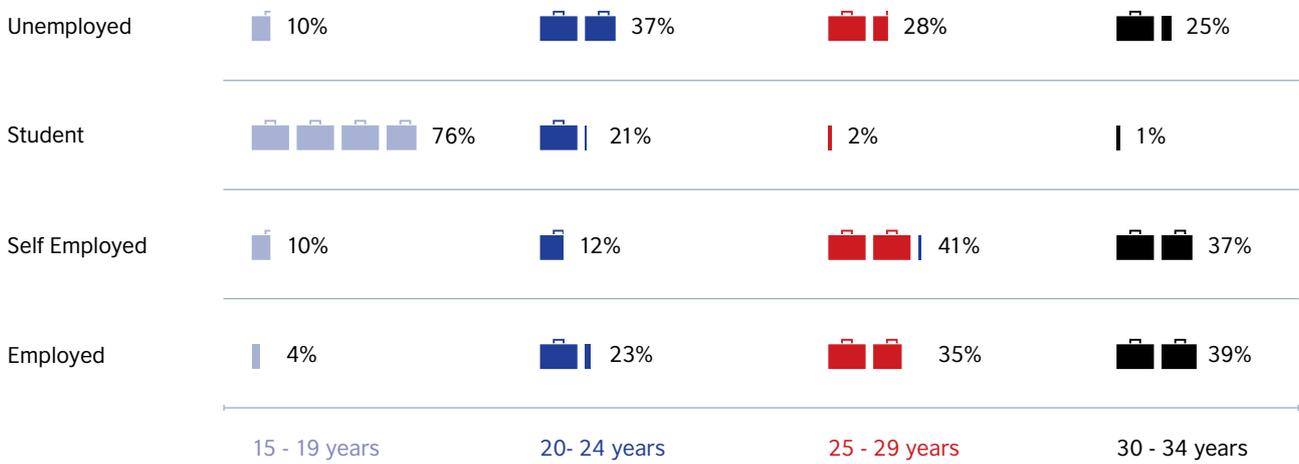
Limpopo Province is significantly worse off in terms of levels of unemployment that the other provinces. Four in ten people from Limpopo said they were unemployed. This is as opposed to closer to three in ten in the other provinces. The higher percentage of young people that are self-employed are in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Perhaps surprisingly the Western Cape is only at two per cent.

Figure 12 illustrates the way in which race and employment intersect.

**Figure 12: Employment status by race (categories combined)**

| | Black African | White | Indian/Asian | Coloured |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unemployed | 36% | 12% | 17% | 31% |
| Student | 36% | 49% | 33% | 39% |
| Self Employed | 4% | 9% | 10% | 1% |
| Employed | 24% | 29% | 40% | 28% |
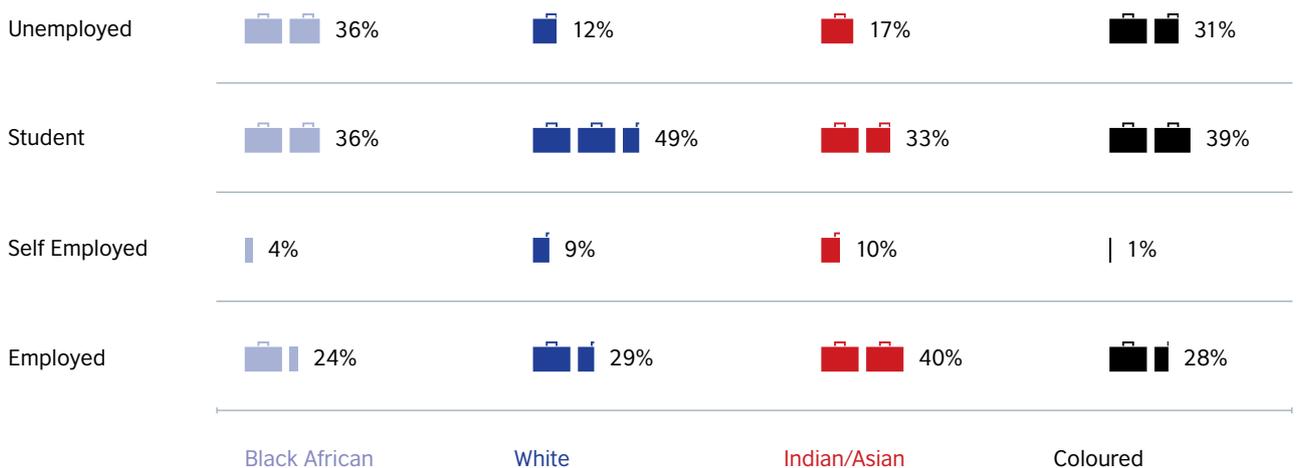
Indian/Asian participants were significantly more likely than those from other race groups to be employed. Employment within this group accounted for 40 per cent as opposed to 24 per cent black African, 29 per cent white people and 28 per cent coloured people. Those from within the coloured community were least likely to be self-employed, while those from the white and Indian/Asian communities were most likely.

Unemployment is highest among black Africans and coloured people. Overall, 55 per cent of the male respondents in the sample are employed, as opposed to 38 per cent of the female respondents.

### 7.2.1. Nature of employment

This following section examines the nature of employment. It reflects on occupations, sectors and wages. This begins with an overview of the national picture, and then locates the sample within this wider context.

As evidenced in the Statistics South Africa data below, nationally the majority of young people are employed in elementary occupations, followed by sales and service workers, craft and related trades, and clerks.

**Table 5: Employment by occupation (October to December 2015)[17]**

| Occupation | Total employment (per cent) | Employed youth (per cent) | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary (including domestic worker) | 30.4 | 29.4 | -1 |
| Sales and service | 15.8 | 18.6 | +2.8 |
| Craft and related trades | 12.4 | 13.3 | +0.9 |
| Clerk | 10.7 | 13.2 | +2.5 |
| Professional | 4.8 | 4.2 | -0.6 |
| Technician | 9.1 | 8.3 | -0.8 |
| Manager | 8.2 | 5.0 | -3.2 |
| Plant and machine operator | 8.0 | 7.6 | -0.4 |
| Skilled agriculture | 0.6 | 0.5 | -0.1 |

This pattern is similar to that of the Next Generation sample (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Employment occupations (including employed and self-employed)**



- 42% — Elementary occupations (e.g. low-skilled or semi-skilled jobs)
- 19% — Service and sales workers
- 10% — Craft and related trade workers (e.g. skilled trades or handicrafts)
- 9% — Clerical support workers (e.g. admin tasks)
- 7% — Professionals (e.g. doctor, nurse or engineer)
- 5% — Technicians and associate professionals
- 3% — Manager/senior officials and legislators
- 2% — Armed forces
- 2% — Plant and machine operators and assemblers
- 1% — Skilled agricultural, forestry, fishery, craft and related trades

As such, the majority of young people occupy elementary occupations (29.4 per cent in national data and 42 per cent in the survey), as well as the services and sales worker category (18.6 per cent in national data and 19 per cent in the survey).

**Figure 14: Estimated average gross monthly income (ZAR)
(employed and self-employed)**

Race    Gender    Province

| | |
|---|---|
| Black African | 5 938 |
| White | 8 310 |
| Indian/Asian | 11 477 |
| Coloured | 5 836 |
| Male | 6 436 |
| Female | 6 267 |
| Gauteng | 5 352 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 8 784 |
| Limpopo | 6 441 |
| Western Cape | 5 016 |

0    2 000    4 000    6 000    8 000    10 000    12 000    14 000
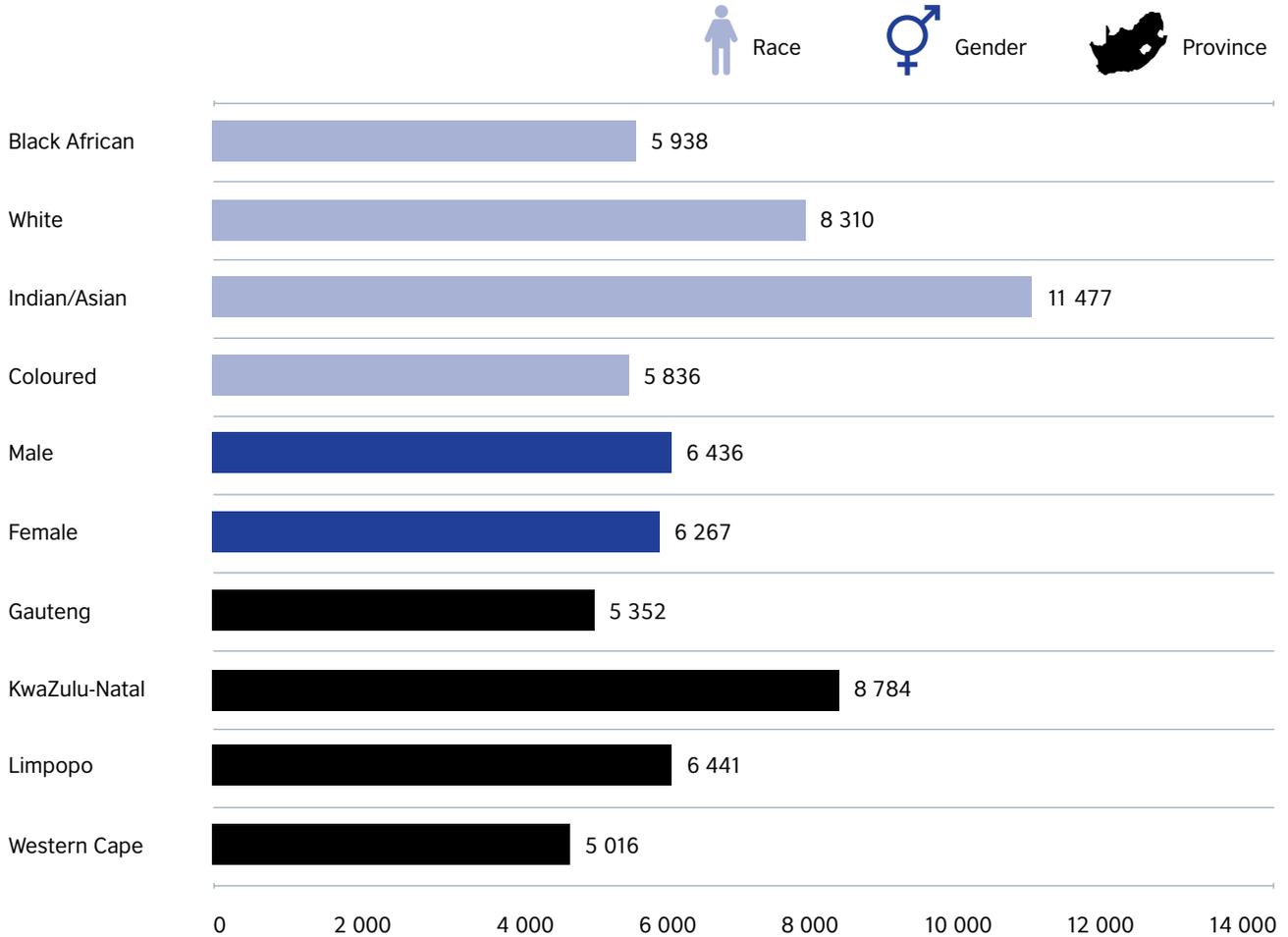
Among those employed an estimated gross monthly income was calculated. This was done by deriving the midpoint of the income category and determining the average salary by indicator (race, gender, provincial location). Overall, Indian/Asian respondents are more likely to earn double what black African and coloured respondents earn. White respondents earn approximately 1.5 times what black African and coloured people earn. There was little variation in earnings between what men and women earn (a point discussed below). In terms of a provincial assessment, those living in KwaZulu-Natal were more likely to earn a larger income than those from the other three provinces. While calculating incomes for

individuals who are self-employed is complex because of the extent to which this is often irregular income, it is interesting to note that when we asked young people during the focus groups what they were earning through their various survivalist strategies, one young man indicated he was earning 250 rand a day helping out mechanics.

This is consistent with an entry-level retail job, and he incurred no travel costs. Another young person sharing how they earn an income during a focus focus group stated:

> 'I would say that I am a bread winner. I am supporting three people. That motivates me. I am motivated to financially support my family. I clean people's yards, and I get 150 rand. I go door to door. If I see your yard is dirty, I know and ask. I charge 150 rand per yard depending on the space.'

The implications of these findings about ways in which young people are finding ways to survive through activities that they undertake in their own communities are explored in the final section of this report.

## 8. What this says about South African youth

This section highlights that South Africa's youth population is growing, is highly mobile and is generally moving towards more urban areas, and away from rural areas. While there has been limited research into the drivers of youth migration, Hall et al.[18] (2015) concluded that there has been an increase in youth migration since the end of Apartheid, largely due to the removal of restrictions on movement (such as the infamous pass laws) since then. The authors suggest that modern youth mobility in South Africa can be characterised in two ways: temporary migration and permanent migration. The main drivers of temporary migration are 'education (including further education) and strategies to enter the labour market' (page 77).

They suggest that permanent migration is less common and usually results from marriage and the movement of families

from rural villages to access better services.

The authors suggest that migration can come with myriad challenges, including even more difficulty finding jobs than those born and growing up in cities, as well as the challenges that come with living in informal settlements with high transport costs to the city hubs. However, the findings in this report, which points to improved services, suggest that the young people who have moved have found ways to improve their living circumstances, and that the level of poverty in their households has reduced (as evidenced by the decrease in the number of households that receive grants).

In terms of education, while there is increased participation in schooling and higher education, there continue to be challenges in completing

> **The main drivers of temporary migration are 'education (including further education) and strategies to enter the labour market'**

matriculation, and the gross participation rate of black students – and especially African and coloured South Africans – continues to be considerably lower than for white South Africans. This finding is consistent with the literature, which states that in the education space, disadvantaged youth are more likely to fail Grade 12, and are thus unable to access post-school education.

>

**Further research highlights the extent to which gender is a factor: 'for all population groups, the employed female shares are lower than male shares, and the largest difference between males and females is in the African group, suggesting that the most disadvantaged group are African females'.**

According to Spaull (2015)[19], educational performance is strongly associated with socio-economic status, so those young people who emerge from conditions of poverty invariably have an inadequate formative education, which negatively affects their educational outcomes and, therefore, their pathway into the labour market. Bhorat's (2004)[20] analysis underscores this point and shows that, 'while 64 out of every 100 tertiary educated individuals found employment in the 1995–2002 period, this figure was 35 for those with a matric and 14 for those with incomplete secondary education'. Thus, education outcomes are a key contributor to a persistent poverty cycle.

These arguments (and this is strongly evident across Statistics South Africa publications) illustrate that the factors, such as race, gender and geography, that determine the quality of, and progression in, education, then also further confound young people's ability to access the economy. Bhorat (2004) observes that between 1995 and 2002, employment gains are 'unevenly distributed according to race, gender, age, education and perhaps most obviously, location', stating that for example, 'employment was generated for only about 28 per cent of all new African entrants into the labour market, relative to 55 per cent of all white new entrants'. Further research highlights the extent to which gender is a factor: 'for all population groups, the employed female shares are lower than male shares, and the largest difference between males and females is in the African group, suggesting that the most disadvantaged group are African females'.[21]

The data in this section also confirms that even when accessing employment, the majority of youth access elementary entry-level jobs. The literature highlights that the labour market is increasingly biased towards higher and higher skills levels, suggesting that those who enter without a post-schooling qualification are unlikely to be able to easily navigate the labour market.[22] Bhorat et al. (2014) observe that the skills-biased nature of labour demand also underpins wage inequality.[23]

Of interest, though, is that the survey results illustrate that for those young people who have been able to access employment, wages that are reported are above the proposed minimum wage. Further, what is promising in the survey is that while a greater percentage of men continue to access employment than women, once in the labour market, there is little variation in earnings between men and women. Studies by Harambee tracing the young people that they have placed, back up this finding.

This may suggest shifting trends with respect to new entrants – which would be positive – as, more generally, South African statistics data that includes the older population shows that female-headed households have poorer earnings than male-headed households in South Africa. However, Harambee also found that men were 18 per cent more likely to be promoted than women and the Next Generation study also shows that race and geography continue to have an impact on earnings.

These findings are consistent with the reality that despite the policies that have been put in place to support change, real challenges face black young people, and in particular black young women, with respect to accessing, progressing and earning in the South African labour market.

These findings reinforce that, as previously reflected in the discussion on youth mobility, while young people show agency and take steps to change their circumstances, this requires of most of them that they first overcome a series of constraints related to their socio-economic context, race and gender, before they are able to successfully transition into meaningful economic opportunities. The concern in this regard is well captured by Seekings (2013)[26], who suggests that many South African youth who are currently in their 20s (the 'born frees' are not necessarily undergoing an extended transition to adulthood, but already living a 'new form of adulthood'. This means that they are 'already living the kind of life that they will probably lead for the rest of their lives'. Therefore, while some youth will move successfully through a process of transition (albeit an extended transition), the lack of education and work opportunities inhibits – and increasingly entrenches – cycles of stunted transitions. Research undertaken elsewhere in Africa reinforces this finding and states that, 'most young Africans are living in a period of

suspension between childhood and adulthood', which Honwana[27] describes as 'waithood'. Honwana argues that 'without jobs young people cannot support themselves and their families' and therefore cannot successfully transition and instead remain in this 'twilight zone'.

The finding in this survey that a full 69 per cent of the sample between the ages of 30 and 34 are not married or living with a partner may relate to the challenges that are suggested in this analysis, and the complexity of this 'new form of adulthood'. It is, however, acknowledged that marriage in general has been showing a constant decline[28] in South Africa. This suggests that further research would be required to understand the extent to which young people are making relationship choices because of the complexities of the transition processes outlined in this section, or whether there are other factors, such as culture.

> # YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS: GETTING INVOLVED

## 9. Interest in politics

Following the optimism of the period just prior to and immediately after the onset of democracy, the mid-1990s were characterised by high levels of disillusionment and a general retreat of young people from politics (Everatt, 2000).[29] Everatt suggests that this change related to ways in which mass mobilisation – including youth mobilisation – was treated during the negotiation period. He observes that, 'when negotiations were going smoothly, quiescence was required; when negotiations hit stumbling blocks, rolling mass action was called for. However much this reflected the needs of the time, it was difficult to maintain ongoing broad-based participation, and it left youth activists in limbo. Youth began to drift away as their particular political contribution, as the foot soldiers of struggle, was increasingly seen as unnecessary. Critically, political organisations failed to develop creative means of enlisting the energy and commitment of youth in the new politics of the interregnum.'(Everatt, 2000, pages 8–9.) He argues that youth could not identify with the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle or the subsequent transition to constitutional democracy. However, he observes that young people emphasised the importance of staying in touch with politics, were more progressive in their thinking than adults, and demonstrated high levels of optimism that the country's challenges could be addressed within the next decade (Everatt, 2000).

More recently, Mattes (2011)[30] found that the attitude of youth to, or engagement with, politics is no different to that of adults, suggesting a general decline in the early enthusiasm that was brought about by the onset of democracy.

Mattes observed that the 'born-frees' do not appear to have a more positive commitment to democracy, with similar attitudes as those of adults being shaped by the conditions in the country. This is recognised in the South Africa National Youth Policy (2015–2020), which cites the HSRC Voter Participation Survey 2014, and indicates that 'according to the survey, democratic performance is rated as falling considerably short of the ideal in relation to accountability (politicians listening to the people before making decisions) and electoral punishment (parties being punished in elections when they perform poorly)' (2015).

Young people in the focus groups suggested that this disillusionment with democracy may in part be because young people increasingly see politics as transactional rather than a strengthening of democracy.

>

'There is this thing that if you are not an ANC member...you don't get anything. We go to apply for a programme, they want to see our membership cards [ANC card]. There are lot of tenders in Orange Farm, but if you do not have an ANC membership card - you won't get it.'

Participant in focus group in Orange Farm

Our research shows that as many as 42 per cent of young people reported that they discussed politics quite often or very often, while 58 per cent indicated that they do not discuss South African politics very often.

**Figure 15: How often do you and your friends discuss South African politics?**

**58%**
Not often

**31%**
Quite often

**11%**
Very often
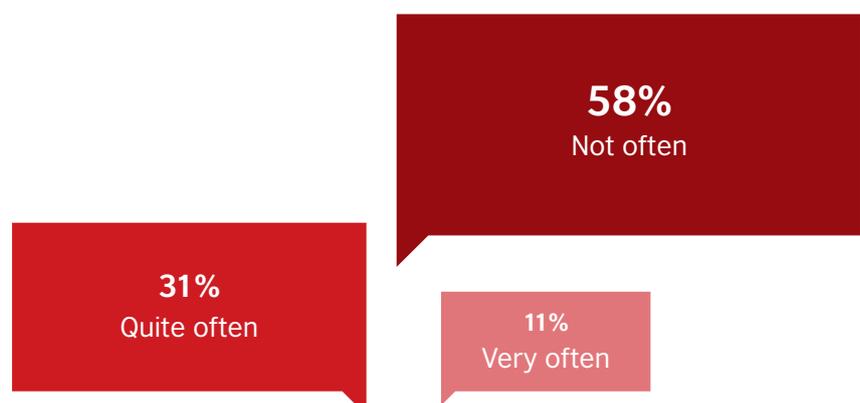
Moreover, when asked about the importance of voting, the vast majority of young people in the survey indicated that they viewed it as important to vote in the South African elections.

**Figure 16: Do you think voting in the South African elections is important?**



15%
No

85%
Yes
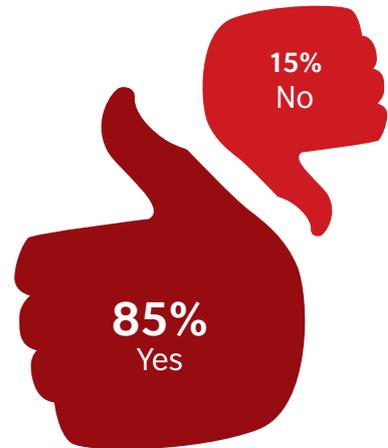
When those who viewed voting as important were asked to indicate why they believed this was the case, the young people in the survey had divergent views as illustrated below:

**Figure 17: Why do you think voting is important?**



3%

48%

49%

Why do you think voting is important?

If young people stand up and vote, we can get the government we want

Voting is everyone's responsibility, even though I don't think it will change things

Other
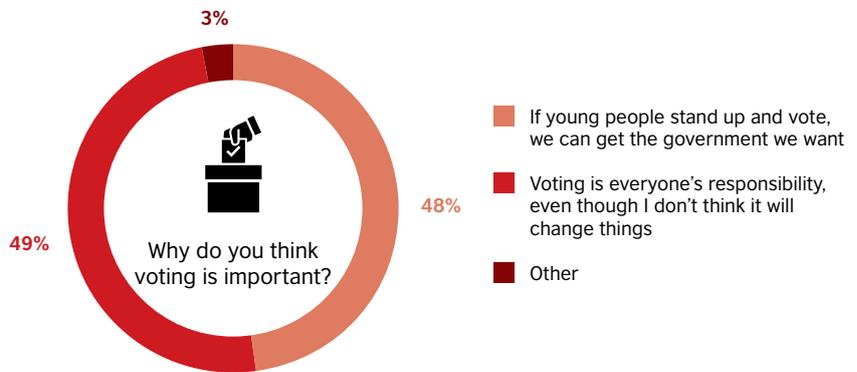
# 10.  Community involvement

Just under half of the respondents indicated that they felt that it is important to vote because if young people vote, they will 'get the government we want'. However, just under half indicated that while they viewed voting as their responsibility, they did not think it would change things. The South Africa National Youth Policy observed that the HSRC Voter Participation Survey 2014 found that the majority of young people were still unaware of the registration age. The policy suggests that this is an area of potential focus for the Independent Electoral Commission's voter education in future.

There are multifarious factors that can affect young people's knowledge of, and interest in, politics and it is evident that there are very varied views about the importance of this involvement. There is evidence from a national study that young people are engaged in social and civic activities (Malila, 2013).[31] Through interviews with 956 respondents, mostly between 15 and 30 years of age in four provinces, Malila found that in the 12 months preceding the interviews, political activities had featured least in terms of what young South Africans had been involved in, and that youth tend to participate more in civic or social activities rather than political activities. Helping a neighbour was the most common answer from survey respondents (79.1 per cent), with being involved in a social group (67.4 per cent) and being active in a religious activity

(64.9 per cent) following second and third. This finding is echoed in a baseline study of young people seeking employment with Harambee,[32] which found that large numbers of youth (44 per cent) report that they volunteer in community organisations. Booysen's (2015)[33] findings also resonate with these and indicate that youth commonly report involvement in small forms of community volunteer or charity work.

The willingness of young people to be involved is also demonstrated strongly in the Next Generation survey, where it was found that young people are active in community organisations. This is illustrated in the figure below, which indicates the number of community groups that young people are affiliated to.

**Figure 18: Number of community groups people are affiliated to**

| | Black African | White | Indian/Asian | Coloured | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 4 | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% |
| 3 | 10% | 5% | 16% | 3% | 9% |
| 2 | 16% | 18% | 10% | 10% | 15% |
| 1 | 41% | 36% | 36% | 39% | 40% |
| 0 | 33% | 41% | 39% | 48% | 35% |

Overall, 65 per cent of the respondents in the survey said that they are a member of one or more community organisation, with a much smaller percentage of participants (11 per cent and 12 per cent respectively), indicating that they have either been involved in setting up a club or group in their community, or held a leadership position in one of these clubs or groups.

Limpopo province – the most rural based and poorest province – was somewhat more likely to have a greater proportion of its residents holding leadership positions, or being involved in establishing community structures than others. The reasons for this would require further exploration.

There were no statistical differences between men and women as to an affiliation to a group, organisation or society. Coloured respondents were marginally less likely than those from other race groups to be members of a community group, while black Africans were most likely. The greatest proportion of people who were affiliated to a group (35 per cent – 40 per cent) were affiliated to one organisation, club, society etc., while in 15 per cent of cases, people were members of two groups. One in ten was a member of three groups.

The most popular types of groups in which young people are involved are as follows:

**Figure 19: Types of community groups young people are affiliated to**



- Church (including a choir)/religiuos group — 38%
- None of these — 36%
- Sports club/group — 19%
- Social club/group — 8%
- Youth Organisation — 8%
- Stokvel — 6%
- Community based organisation — 5%
- Political Party — 4%
- Theatre/dance/art/culture group — 3%
- Civics or street/block/ward/hostel committee — 3%
- Women's organisation — 3%
- Other — 1%
- Resident or ratepayers association — 1%
- Trade union — 1%
- Disability organisation — 1%
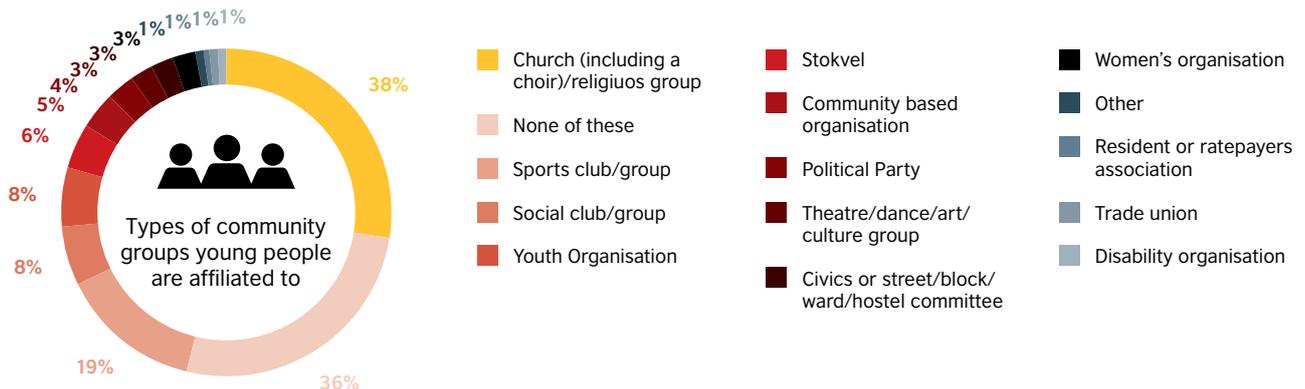
> 'Community organisations like ours are very important. We take young people from doing funny stuff, crime, drugs, and make them think about other things. Most young people not working. They sleep. Wake up. Sleep. Wake up. Not doing anything every day. Their mind is getting slow. Even if they get a job, they won't be productive. They forget how to push themselves… become afraid of things. We ask young people to work with us. We test their minds and wake them up again.'
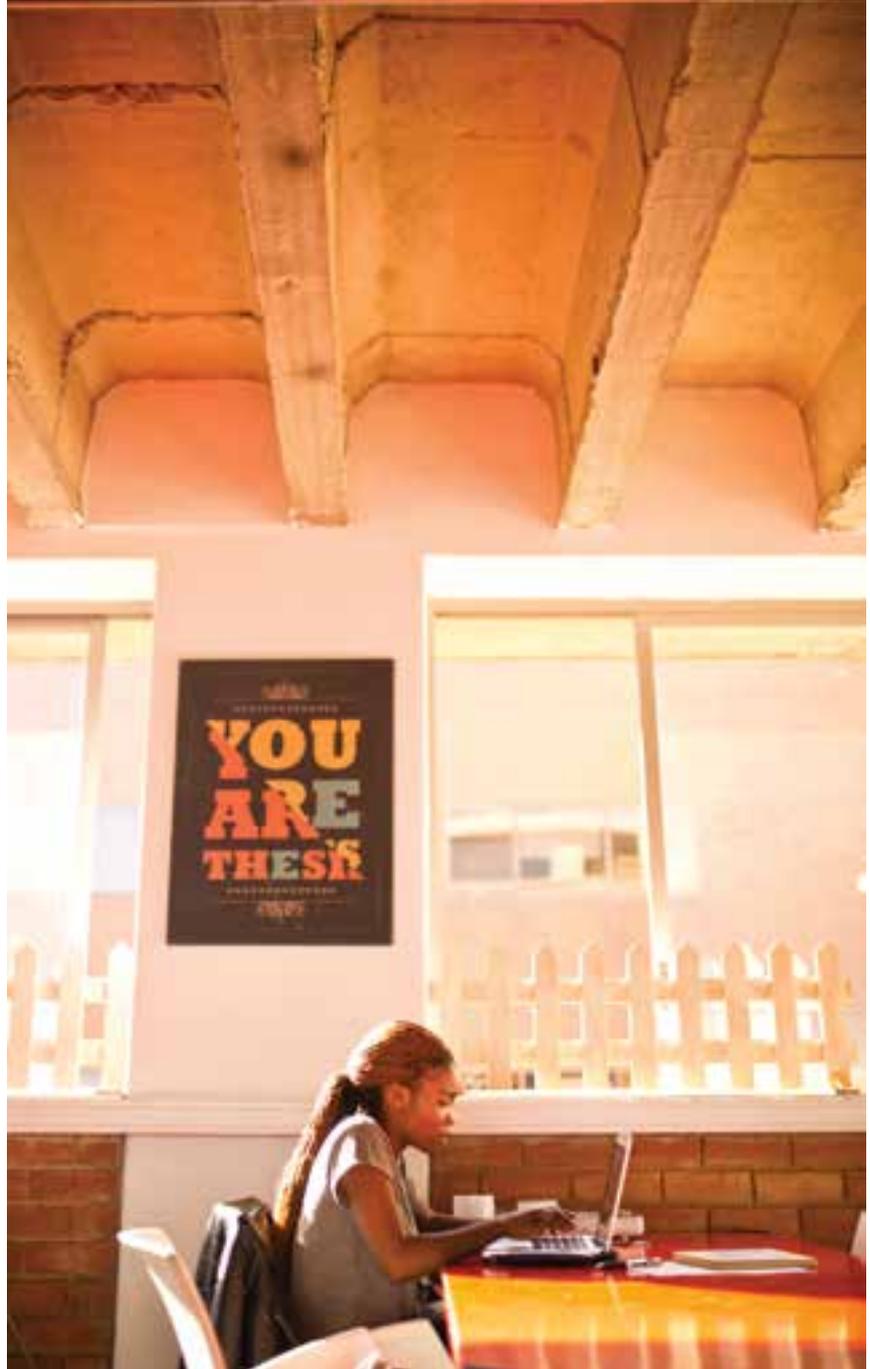
## 11. What this says about South African youth

This section highlights that while there is a view that many young people are disillusioned with politics, and that their focus is primarily on access to the economy, the Next Generation survey illustrates that almost half of South Africa's youth are interested in politics, and almost half of these young people believe that their vote can change things. However, as illustrated in the literature, as well as the comments from young people in the focus group, there is scepticism about the extent to which this is contributing to democracy. This may suggest that while the commitment to ensuring that young people know that they can vote – a priority that is outlined in the National Youth Policy – is being realised, for many young people there is considerably more work that is required to translate this into a belief that this vote will result in change.

What is evident, though, is that young people are very involved in civic and social engagement. This was evidenced in the research cited in this section, as well as the findings from the Next Generation survey, and by the comments made by young people in the focus groups, who observe that this is a critical space for young people to engage and 'remain awake'. These findings are also reinforced by the data provided by Statistics South Africa (2017),[34] which states that the number of

volunteer workers increased from 1.3 million in 2010 to 2.2 million in 2014. The report also notes that the majority of those who volunteer work in elementary occupations or are service and sales workers. The literature highlighted the importance of this social and civic engagement in the development of youth identity and building a sense of belonging and citizenship (Burns et al., 2015).[35]

This research has also highlighted that this involvement in community structures and organisations is also seen as important in enhancing the ability of young people to navigate their way to resources that will sustain, and/or improve, their welfare (Theron, 2012).[36] Ogawa et al. (2017)[37] observe that 'being socially connected enables young people to develop resilience and 'gives them a sense of belonging'. The concept of bonding capital - social capital built first and foremost in the family and community - is also useful in this regard as these networks 'support young people's resilience in the face of risk or persistent challenge to their well-being'. Phrased differently, Theron (2012) defines resilience as 'both a process and an outcome characterised by positive adaptation or adjustment to significant adversity.'

There is also a need for young people to go beyond the networks associated with bonding capital, and to be supported to diversify their networks so that bonding capital is gradually augmented by bridging networks (Lancee, 2012).[38] These bridging networks are important as they create wider networks and are therefore considered crucial to 'get ahead' (Putnam, 2000).[39]

During this research, young people demonstrated their awareness of the importance of networks in securing real jobs, in that they may either get employed in the organisation in which they volunteer and/or it may increase their networks and enhance their chances of gaining employment elsewhere. The importance of these networks is evidenced by research undertaken by Singizi in South Africa, which highlights that networks are the most useful job searching strategy, and that those young people who are not embedded in local networks therefore find it difficult to seek employment.[40]

The importance of the resilience of young people and the ways in which this enables young people to navigate pathways and access the resources they require – including but not limited with respect to their ability to access economic opportunities – is explored further in this report.

# > YOUNG PEOPLE NAVIGATING THEIR WORLD

## 12. Looking in: the future is 'ours'

Some literature on South African youth has found that despite multiple challenges, young people continue to be optimistic. Using data from the 2005 South Africa Social Attitudes Survey, Boyce (2010)[41] suggests that only half the youth are satisfied with their lives as a whole. It is worth noting the differences across racial groups – 74 per cent of white youth expressed satisfaction, compared to only 45 per cent of African youth. Yet he also found that all youth are generally optimistic about the future, and African youth demonstrate the highest level of optimism relative to other race groups. Boyce concludes that suggestions of 'widespread cynicism among the youth are unfounded' (page 96) as youth are generally optimistic, and believe that their lives, and the country as a whole, will improve in the near future.

These findings resonate with those of Swartz et al. (2013),[42] which highlight the high level of optimism among township youth, despite pervasive conditions of poverty. This optimism is also illustrated in a Harambee baseline survey of 60,413 youth, which further showed a general level of optimism about the future.

In the Next Generation survey, young people were asked to assess how they felt currently, and how they anticipated they would feel in five years' time. They were asked to respond to aspects of their lives by giving a score out of 10 with 1=terrible and 10=excellent.

**Figure 20: Perceptions of self: now and in five years (mean score out of ten)**



Legend: Now, 5 Years

| | Happiness | Education | Career Ambitions | Finances | Personal Relations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Now | 5.95 | 5.35 | 5.67 | 3.88 | 5.99 |
| 5 Years | 8.57 | 8.38 | 8.43 | 8.15 | 8.48 |
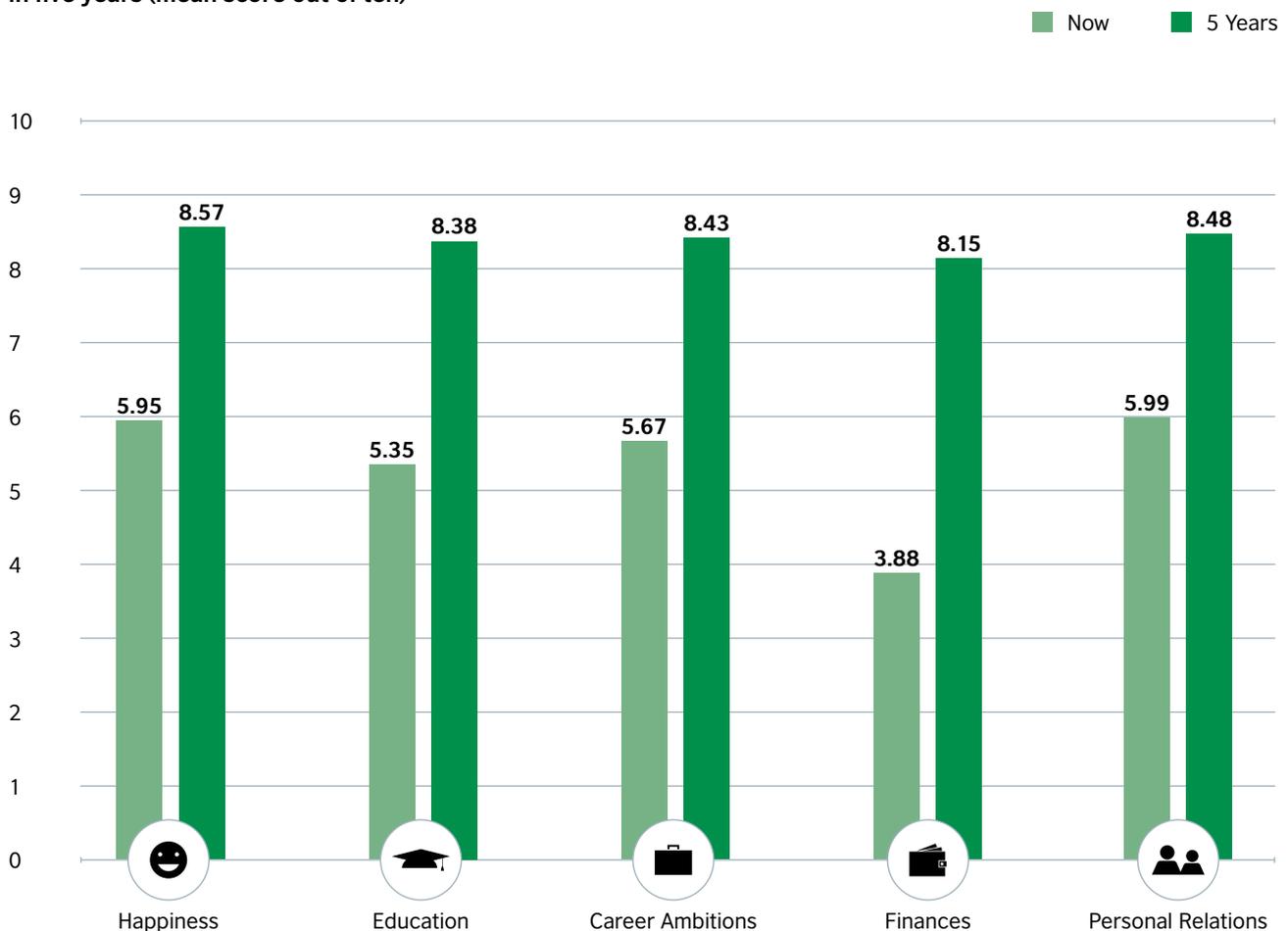
On average, respondents rated their happiness levels at approximately 6 out of 10 currently, but estimated they would be much happier in the future. This perception of the self as being better off in the future applied to all aspects of their lives. Respondents were most likely to give a low score to their current financial state than any of the other aspects of their lives. Interestingly respondents were most satisfied with their current state of health.

Applying a race analysis to the data shows that white youth were the more optimistic with regards to their future, while Africans were the least optimistic. This is consistent with the findings outlined in the previous sections and in the wider literature regarding the relationship between race and opportunity. However, it is evident from this figure that there is a sense of optimism across all communities. This is consistent with findings from

other research (including a tracer study undertaken by Harambee that paints a similar picture). Burns et al. (2015) observes that despite 'stark economic and social challenges', South Africa's youth 'display a remarkable sense of optimism and independence, and a deep desire to assert their agency in order to escape their dire material circumstances'.[43]

**Figure 21: Perceptions of self: now and in five years by race (mean score out of ten)**
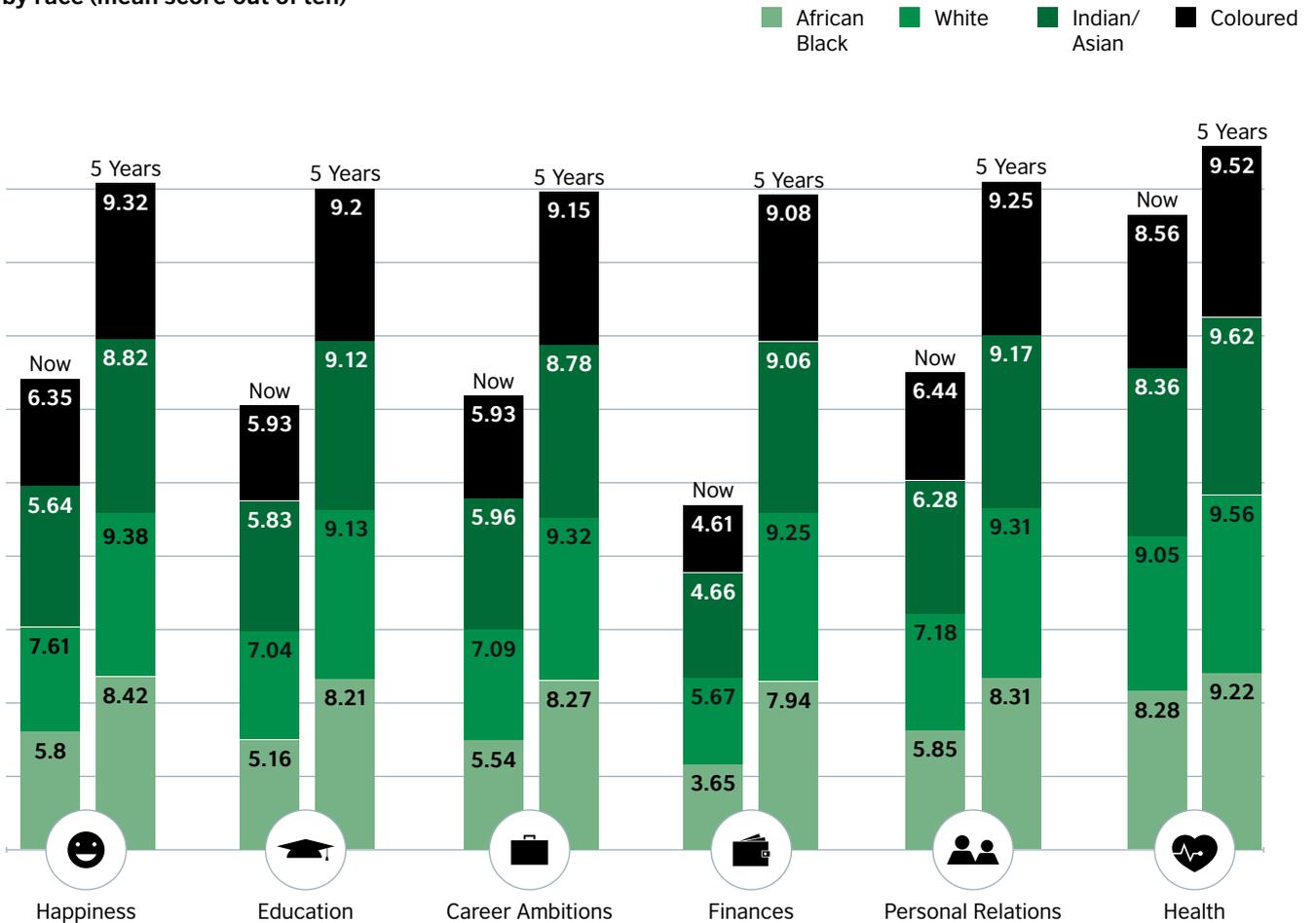
What emerged strongly with respect to these perceptions is the number of young people who indicated that they believe their lives will improve through opportunities that they are creating.

- 'I would rate it at 3 [now] and, depending, on more customers I will get to fix their car, it will improve to 10 in five years.'
- 'I would rate 6 for now then in five years it would be at 10 because my farm grows day by day, as I would be having a lot to sell to the community and the surrounding [areas].'

- 'I would rate my life now at 5 then it will grow depending on more customers I get from my hairdresser salon to rate at 10 in five years.'
- 'I would rate myself at 6 then work hard to promote my music. In five years it will be at 10.'
- For now, I would rate 5 but in five years it will be 10 as I'm working on my co-operative to get working.'
- 'I think for now I rate I would rate at 4 depending on more gardening work I get it will improve to 10 in five years. Maybe I will also be working by that time.'

The relationship between optimism and agency are explored further in the following figures, which ask young people about the extent to which young people feel that they have control over their own life and whether young people feel able to change their own lives. These concepts are then considered in the discussion that concludes this section, which also reflects on the relationship between these concepts and the resilience of youth, as described in the previous section.

Figure 22 shows that the majority of respondents believe that what happens is their own doing.

**Figure 22: Personal agency**



👍 What happens to me is my own doing    👎 Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking

| | Black African | White | Indian/Asian | Coloured | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Don't have enough control | 40 | 13 | 42 | 35 | 38 |
| My own doing | 60 | 87 | 58 | 65 | 62 |
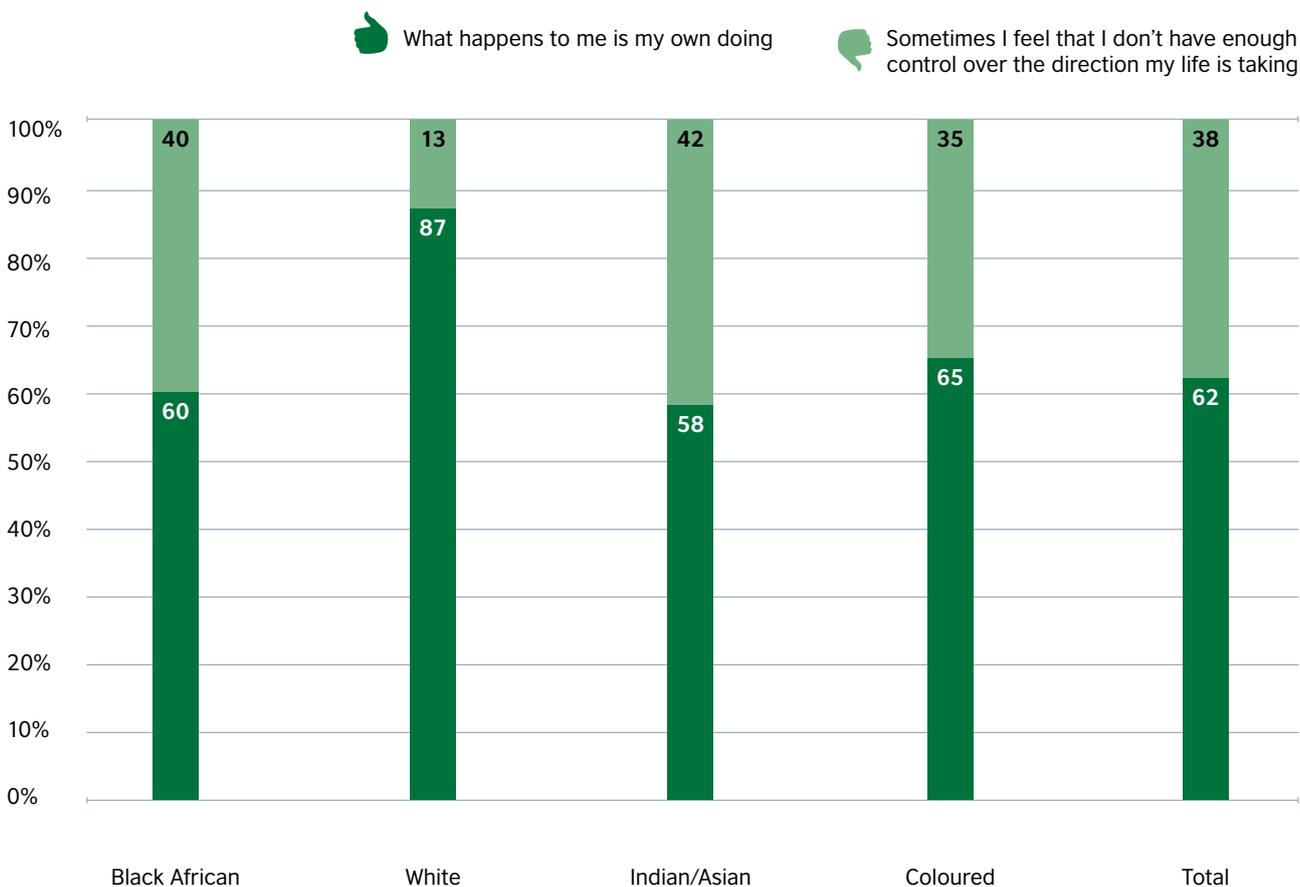
As per the figure above, 62 per cent of respondents said 'what happens to me is my own doing'. White respondents were more likely to say this than those from other groups.

The previous comments from young people highlight the extent to which young people are taking the initiative and running enterprises such as hairdressing, music, farming and fixing cars, which they envisage will grow. This strong sense of agency was well expressed by young people in the focus groups.

> The facilitator asked a group of 40 young people from Duncan Village and Pefferville in East London: 'Who is responsible for getting you jobs?' One participant shouted 'the Councillor! [local politician]'. However, she was booed into silence by the other members of the group. Another participant then said, 'We have to depend on ourselves. We have to not be lazy and we have to work hard if we want our life to change.' This time the group cheered in response.

A respondent from another focus group commented: 'It's not like we are people who just sit around here. We have set up our enterprises with the Jozi SMME (small, medium and micro enterprise) Hub, and we are ready to submit for tenders when government work comes. Lots of us have started NGOs for sport, for vulnerable children, then there are some girls who run talent shows. When the MOOV (Massive Open Online Varsity) was here, people did the tests and applied for coding. We are always trying.'

Figure 23 reviews responses to the statement 'I don't know how to change my life'.

**Figure 23: Perception of personal ability to influence change**
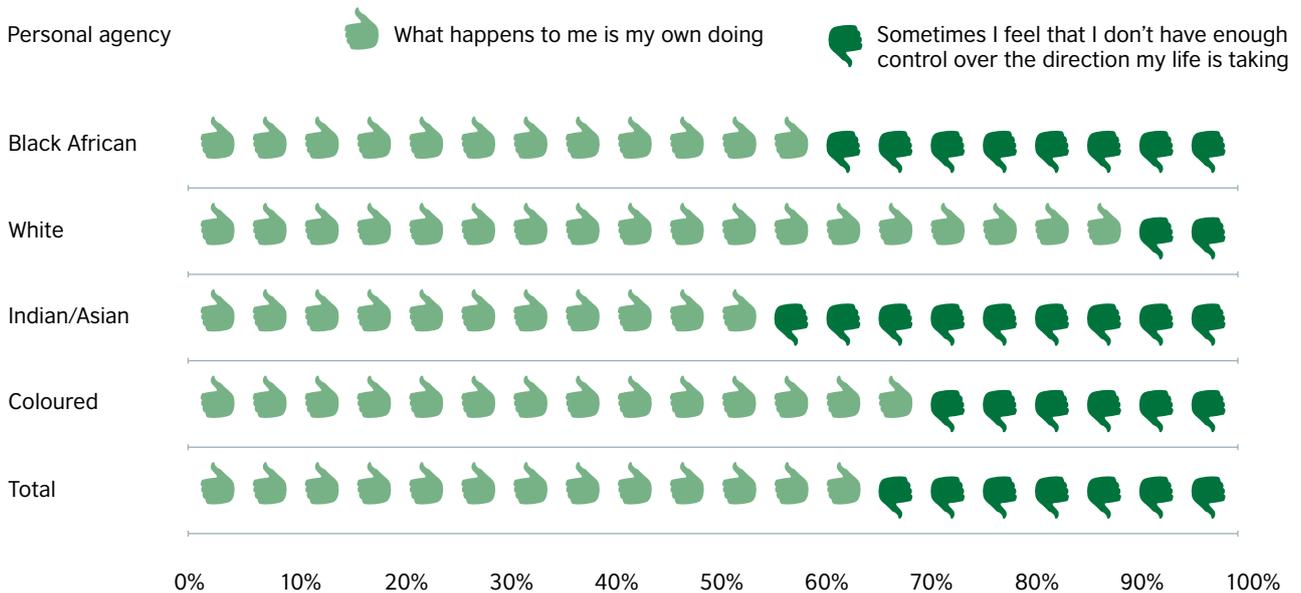


This graph highlights that there is a positive correlation between a person's education level and their sense of their own ability to influence change (noting the dip at postgraduate, but the sample of postgraduates within this survey is small, and therefore not considered representative). Those with higher education levels are more likely to disagree with the statement 'I don't know how to change my life'.
The text below shows the response of female focus group member when asked why she thinks she will be happier in five years' time.

> 'I am educated so it will be easy because of this. When I study hard and pass and get a college certificate and qualifications my life will get better. I have a matric and certificates in stock-taking, security and I am busy with another course.'

## 13. Social capital

The previous section explored: (i) the importance of young people taking responsibility for making changes, that is, demonstrating personal agency; (ii) the extent to which young people have, and make use of, a network (both tight and more widely defined) to access resources; and (iii) that through these actions are able to build resilience and adapt. To extend these concepts, young people were then asked who/what can help them achieve the things they want to achieve.

**Figure 24: Who/what can help you achieve some of the things you want to achieve?**
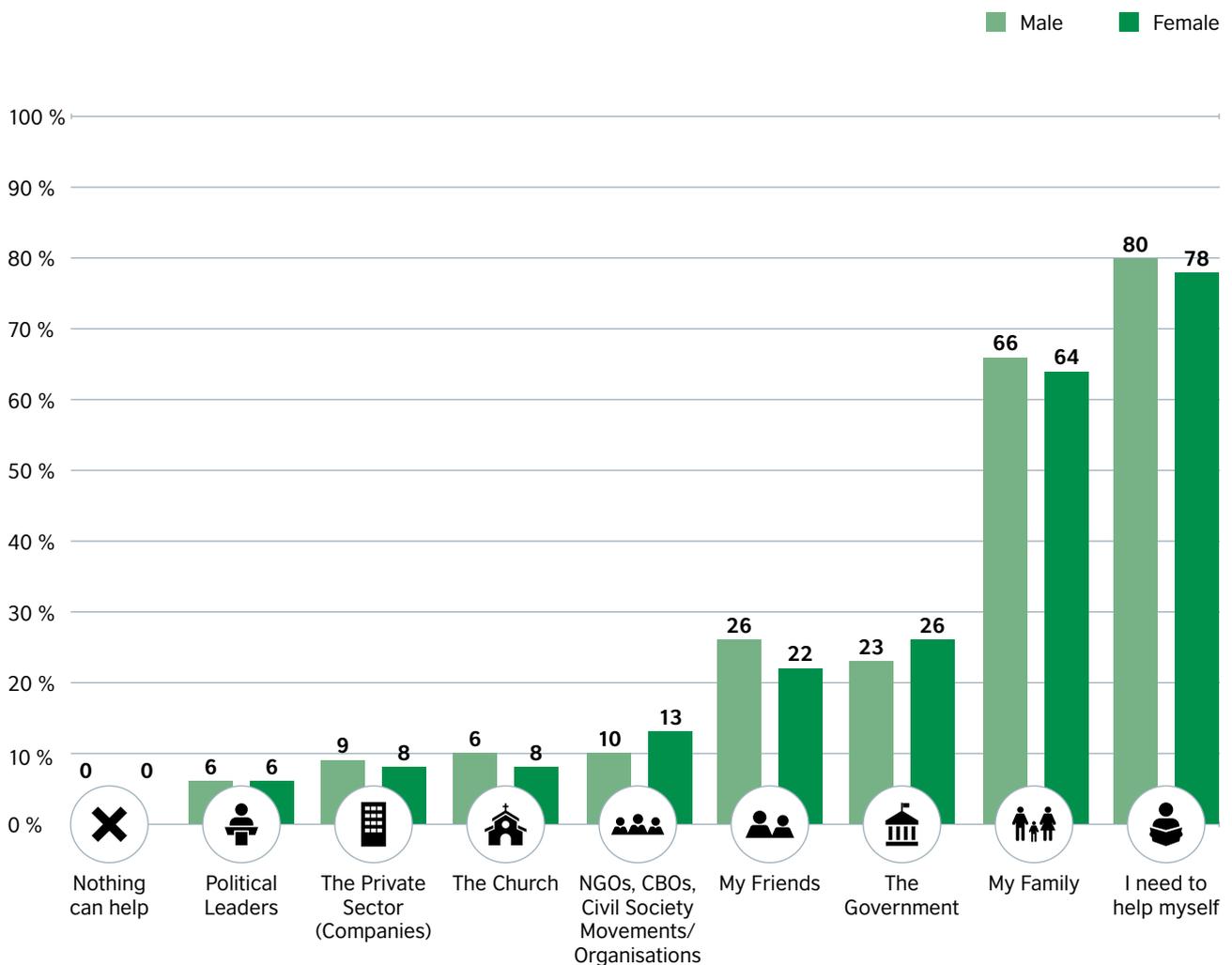


Figure 24 reinforces the previous findings and highlights that young people have a strong sense of self-reliance, with approximately eight in ten saying they needed to help themselves. This also shows that young people recognise the importance of relationships: two in three identified a family as an important source of support. Approximately one in four young people looked beyond the value of relationships, or 'bonding capital', and indicated that they would seek support from individuals who are in networks beyond their immediate sphere: 'bridging' or 'linking' capital. The role of the government is seen as more helpful than NGOs, the church or the private sector.

## 14. Networking

The Next Generation research then specifically considered the ways in which young people engage with the labour market. Here too, the theme of optimism in the face of challenge continues.

South Africa's Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE)[44] – based on surveys of youth in the three largest metropolitan centres in 2008 – suggests that 'there is no evidence … of a "lost generation" of young South Africans who are too hopeless or negative to look for work or to keep a job if they get one. Instead, the professed values of unemployed young people in our sample are similar to – and almost as positive as – those of young people who have found work or self-employment.' The authors suggest that the youth labour pool comprises many youth with a positive attitude towards work and would take up opportunities if they existed and their skills matched the needs of employers.

The Next Generation survey confirms the views expressed by CDE. Despite the multiple factors that block access for young people to the world of work, only eight per cent of unemployed young people had ceased to look for work.

Their optimism and drive notwithstanding, South African youth need to call on multiple strategies to access the labour market. A CDE study states that as a result of poor educational outcomes and limited employment opportunities, many youth become outsiders in the labour market, with little cultural or social capital to provide information on or access to work opportunities. If they are lucky enough to find employment, they struggle to retain this, and will struggle to find further employment (CDE, 2008).

**Figure 25: Strategies to look for work (multiple mention)**
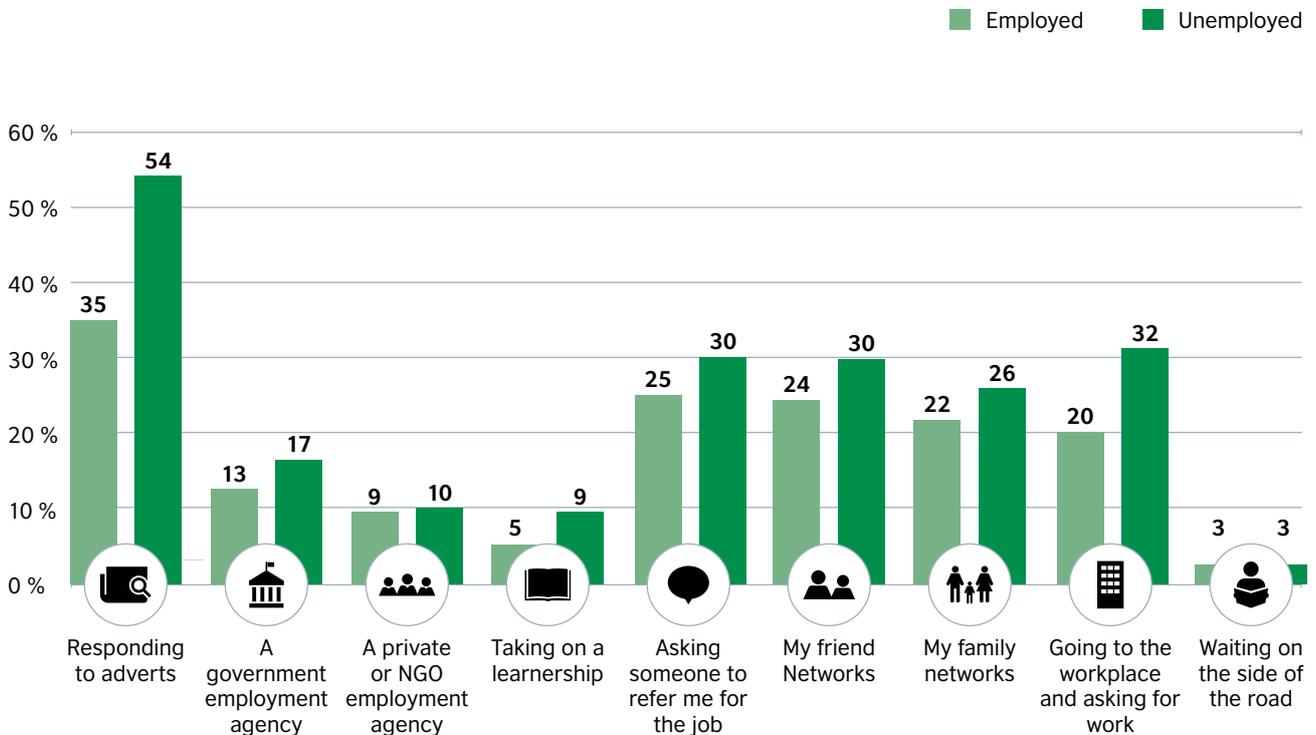
The greatest percentage of both employed and unemployed said they would or had responded to adverts. Crucially, both unemployed and employed youth stated that they relied on referrals from friends, family or others. One young person in the focus group observed that:

> **>**

**'I had also stopped looking for a job because I once looked for a job but the supervisor wanted money so I could get in. I went to another shop and the lady was rude, shouted at us and told us there are no jobs and why were we there. But then after a week I saw a person from where I stay in that same place and he knew someone and had the connection. If you don't have connections then you can't get in.'**

However, while young people state that they rely on their immediate networks, far fewer cast their net wider and look to a government, private or NGO placement agency. This is despite the importance of supporting young people to develop these wider networks being recognised by the different partners in South Africa. There are now a number of placement programmes cutting across government, non-government and private sectors, which are intended to ensure young people move into contracted opportunities such as a job, a learnership[4] or an internship. Many of the private placement agencies focus on higher level occupations, while the Department of Labour placement services, as well as a range of initiatives supported by the Jobs Fund, focus on young people with limited formal qualifications and often no experience. Critical to the success of such programmes are strong relationships with employers and, ideally, a process that matches candidates with opportunities in which they are likely to

succeed. A number of government policies seek to support these initiatives and support access to the workplace. This includes the Employment Tax Incentive that was introduced by National Treasury in late 2013 in order to incentivise businesses to employ more young people. The extent to which these programmes address the needs of different cohorts of young people is a matter of some discussion[45] and will be reflected on again in the concluding section of this report.

## 15. Looking out (connecting with support)

As indicated in the previous section, the ability of young people to navigate their way to resources is central to the development of their resilience. However, there are challenges in the capacity of these support systems to provide those resources, and Theron (2012) notes an imperative to build the capacity of individuals, families and communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways to share resources.[46] This section reflects on the types of services available in the community, the ways in which young people access these services and the extent to which young people are willing to work with government to strengthen these communities.

### 15.1. Resources and services available to young people in communities

It is important to understand the challenge of accessing services at the level of the community. A high-level summary of initiatives currently available in the community includes, but is not limited to, the following:

• The largest government programme within the community is that of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), including the Community Work Programme (CWP). While it is noted that these programmes were not designed as youth programmes, they have youth targets, and almost half the participants in these programmes are young people.

While this is a national initiative, these programmes are still not in all communities in South Africa.
• The Department of Higher Education and Training supports second-chance education (a chance to attain the final qualification of secondary schooling). In addition, it provides technical and vocational education and training, as well as community education. However, these are only in some communities and the reach of these programmes is limited.
• The Department of Labour has Labour Centres across the country. These assist with unemployment insurance, but are also intended to assist young people with work readiness and placement into the workplace. Some of these centres are part of a government centre that also offers other forms of support.
• The Department of Social Development also supports youth mobilisation and community development programmes within the community and, in some communities, there is a centre that addresses substance abuse. In others there are social workers and care workers (though these are usually employed by NGOs in these communities).
• There are also initiatives to support sports and culture. These are enabled both by the relevant government department, as well as by NGOs.
• A number of government departments support small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) development programmes and local government plays an important role in enabling local economic development.

### 15.2. Ways in which young people access this support

The Next Generation survey asked young people about whether they received support in key areas (including bursaries, support to start a business, cultural facilities, support in terms of housing, support to look for a job, psychological support, sporting facilities and support for substance abuse).

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4 > Learnerships are a learning programme that culminates in an occupational qualification. They include an institutional component and a workplace component.

**Figure 26: Community services available and services needed**



Have     Don't have but need
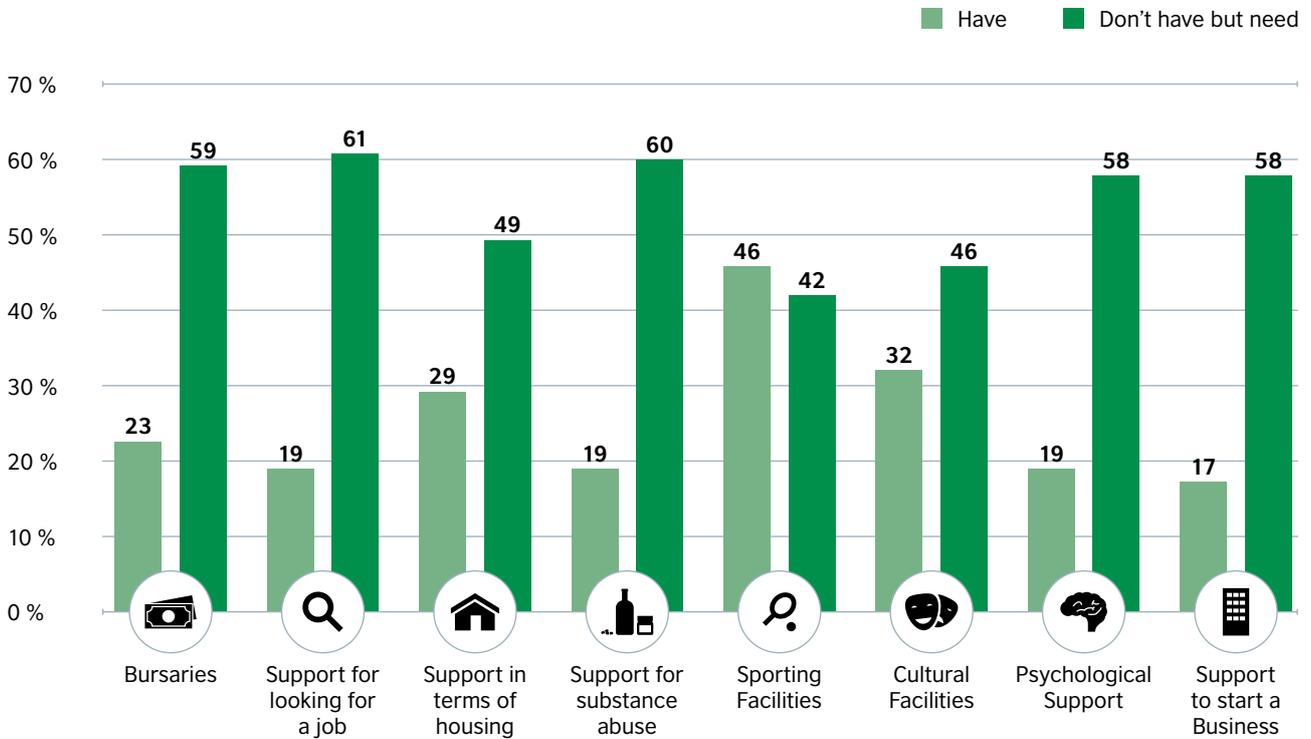
Sixty-one per cent of respondents indicated that they need support looking for jobs, and 60 per cent reported that they need support with issues around substance abuse. Also highly sought after were bursaries (59 per cent), psychological support (58 per cent) and support to start a business (58 per

cent). Forty-six per cent of young people indicated that they have access to sporting facilities, although it was the least sought-after need. Looking across the provinces surveyed, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal are overwhelmingly more under-resourced than the Western Cape and Gauteng.

The high demand for support to deal with substance abuse, as well as psychological support, is in part explained by the levels of challenge reported by young people when responding to the survey about issues of crime and drugs in the community.

**Figure 27: 'Yes' responses to issues of crime, gangs and drugs in the community**



Substance abuse a problem?     Been a victim of crime?     Gangs a problem?

Black African     White     Indian/Asian     Coloured     Total

> 
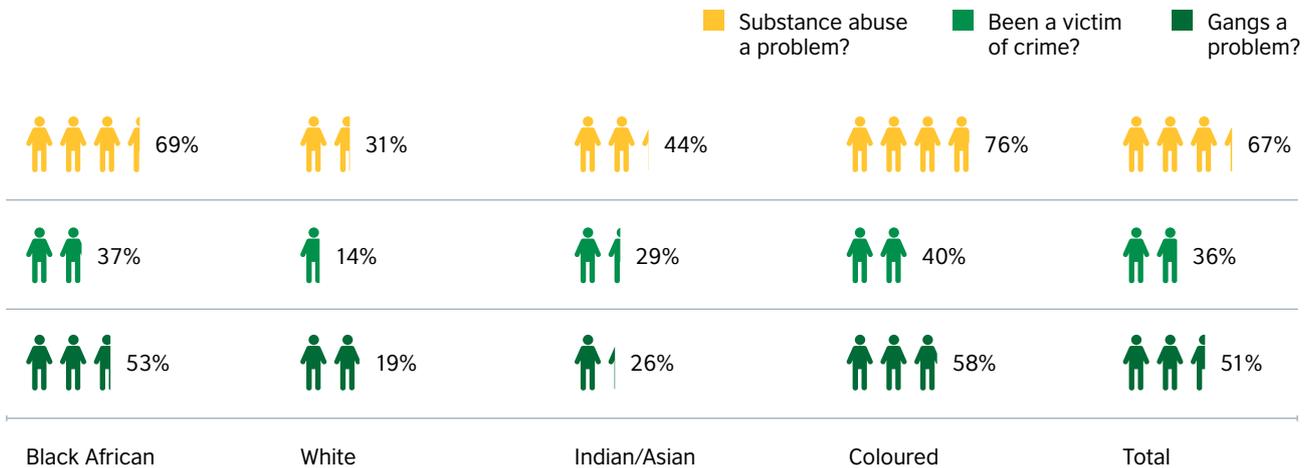
One focus group respondent identified the biggest challenges in their community as simply: 'No jobs. Drugs.'

During interviews with community youth leaders in Gauteng, the North West, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape young people consistently raised substance abuse as a scourge in their communities. They noted the lack of any government support services in their communities, but there was a consistent view that their organisations/ groups had the power to 'shift this'.

>

'When I decided I had to stop, it was R80 for one Mandrax tablet, R25.00 for a quarter. There is only one income in our house – my mother's pension. I decided I had to stop after the pastor people spoke to the gangs about what we could change. But the day was so long. So many hours in a day when you don't take drugs. Me and five friends, we have started a drama group. We practise all the time. And we enter competitions all around this place. Sometimes we can win two or three thousand. It keeps us busy, and we are meeting people.' Former gang member

>

'People do silly things because they are bored. Because they are sad. Because they give up. If we can keep them busy they get more hopeful and they don't give up.' Youth leader

These findings on the challenges young people experience in accessing support suggest that while there are programmes in many communities, these do not sufficiently meet their needs. This may be because they are not in enough communities, their reach in these communities is not extensive enough, or the service does not address the need. These issues are reflected on again in the concluding section of this report.

## 16. Building dynamic communities

The extent varies to which young people believe that they are responsible for resolving problems as members of the community, or that they believe that this should be done with or by government.

**Figure 28: Do you believe that the community you live in should play a role in resolving its problems? (by province)**



Legend:
- No, that's the government's job
- Yes, communities should look for ways to resolve their own problems
- I think government and communities should work together
- I'm not sure

| Province | I'm not sure | Government & communities work together | Communities resolve own | Government's job |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gauteng | 1 | 61 | 21 | 17 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 3 | 59 | 23 | 15 |
| Limpopo | 4 | 48 | 28 | 20 |
| Western Cape | 1 | 60 | 24 | 15 |
| Total | 2 | 58 | 23 | 17 |

When asked if the community they reside in should play a role in resolving its problems, the majority of young people (58 per cent) said they thought government and communities should work together to resolve issues. One in four agreed that communities should look for ways to resolve their own problems, while approximately one in six felt the responsibility lay solely with government. There was little variance across the provinces in responses given.

This demonstrates that young people express both a sense of personal agency and a collective responsibility for change in the community. While there is uncertainty about how well they think government is working, many young people look to the institution as a personal resource for themselves and a partner for their communities.

## 17. Looking out (accessing information)

In order to access support, young people first need to access information. This section reflects on how young people do that, and the extent to which this information enables them to access support.

Young people were first asked to identify the electronic devices they have access to in their homes:

**Figure 29: Which of the following do you have access to in your house?**

| | Desktop Computer | Laptop Computer | Tablet/iPad | Smart Cellular Phone | Regular Cellular Phone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black African | 12% | 24% | 16% | 73% | 31% |
| White | 41% | 76% | 70% | 86% | 22% |
| Indian/Asian | 44% | 46% | 55% | 70% | 25% |
| Coloured | 17% | 31% | 22% | 70% | 29% |
| Total | 15% | 28% | 20% | 73% | 30% |
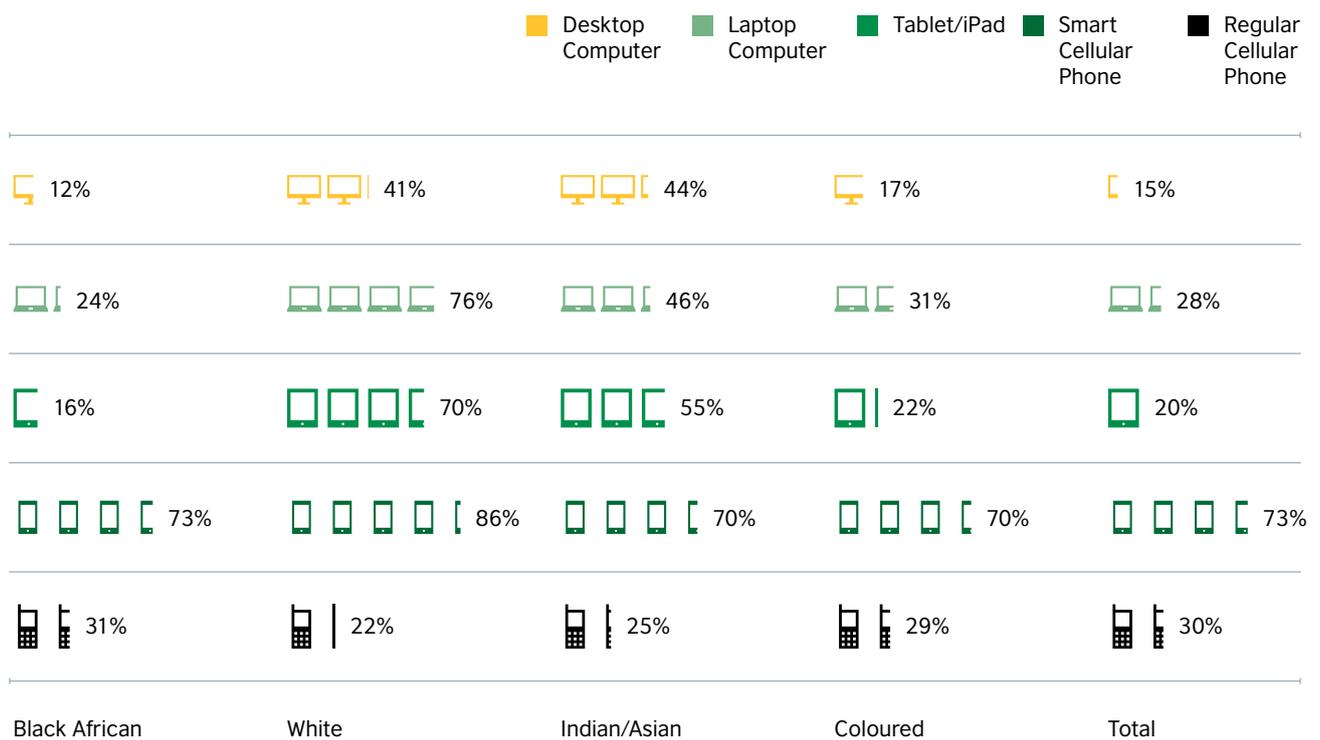
This figure illustrated that young people are most likely to identify a smart phone above other devices. White and Indian/Asian respondents were more likely than African and coloured respondents to have a laptop computer or tablet. With regards to these devices those in the white community were much better off than those from other race groups.

**Figure 30: Access to the internet?**



Access to the internet?

- 15% Wifi paid for by myself/family
- 47% Free public access (e.g. library, school, university, public hot spots, etc.)
- 18% Paid public access (e.g. internet cafe, coffee shops, etc.)
- 20% Never access the internet
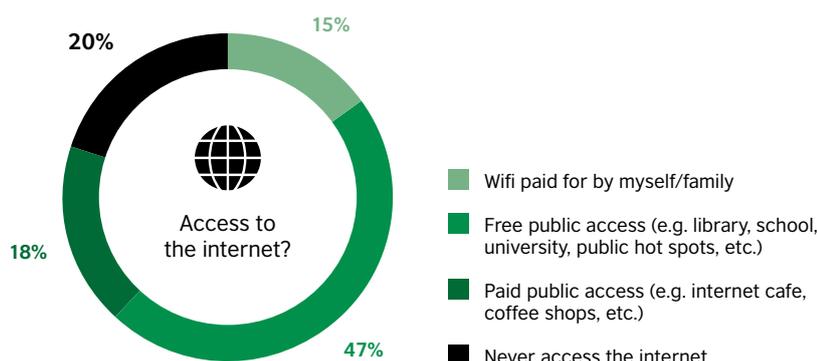
The survey found that the majority of young people have access to the internet and that almost half have access to free internet. Nonetheless, a large minority (20.1) per cent stated that they do not have access to internet. Statistics South Africa (2017)[47] indicated that 59 per cent of South Africans had access to the internet in 2016, and a comparison of these two sets of data suggests that young people tend to have higher levels of access to the internet than the general population.

**Figure 31: Main uses for the internet/apps**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 🟨 To contribute to community/activist/political activities | 🟩 For professional/work purposes | 🟩 To share my opinions on different topics | 🟩 To look for jobs |
| 🟩 To get advice on various issues | ⬛ For fun/entertainment | 🟦 To connect with family and friends | 🟦 For news/information |

| Black African | White | Indian/Asian | Coloured | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4% | 1% | 7% | 1% | 3% |
| 10% | 9% | 7% | 10% | 10% |
| 14% | 9% | 4% | 6% | 12% |
| 16% | 2% | 10% | 2% | 14% |
| 15% | 38% | 19% | 12% | 16% |
| 37% | 44% | 37% | 40% | 38% |
| 50% | 56% | 48% | 46% | 50% |
| 64% | 76% | 83% | 66% | 66% |

The greatest proportion of respondents (66 per cent) said they mainly access the internet to get news/information. Fifty per cent of people said they use it to connect with family and friends, and fun/entertainment is the next most popular usage. It was not widely used as a mechanism for seeking employment, but was used for this purpose more extensively by black Africans than those of other race groups.

**Figure 32: First source of information for important issues**

Legend: Black African | White | Indian/Asian | Coloured | Total



The internet/online: Black African 54, White 65, Indian/Asian 63, Coloured 47, Total 54

Friends: Black African 12, White 9, Indian/Asian 13, Coloured 24, Total 13

Family: Black African 31, White 26, Indian/Asian 25, Coloured 26, Total 30

Religious leader/s: Black African 1, Indian/Asian 1, Coloured 1

Newspaper: Black African 2, Coloured 2

Books/journals: Indian/Asian 1, Total 1

The majority of respondents identified the internet as the source they would turn to first when looking for information, although this was true for a lower percentage of coloured respondents. One in three respondents said they would ask a family member, while approximately one in eight said they would talk to a friend. Newspapers, religious authorities and books/journals did not feature as significant sources of information.

A youth leader of a community organisation notes:

> 'In our community, successful people move out. So young people who are still growing up don't see those people and do not get advice from those who have succeeded. Their role model is the old man who talks a lot in community meetings.
> Youth don't have reliable information sources.
> They may be there but youth don't know them. Most young people who come here get information from the internet and friends."

## 18. What this says about South African youth

Despite the challenges, South African youth tend not only to be optimistic about their futures, but also willing to take responsibility for them. They have confidence in their abilities to transform their own lives. While this sense of control over their lives tends to be higher with higher education levels, this research illustrates that these views permeates across different cohorts of young people.

This section also shows, though, that young people recognise that to 'get ahead' they need to seek support from their families and friends, as well as from others in institutions, such as government. This support is needed across the board: assisting them to seek employment, or bursaries for further study, but also important in accessing other forms of support, such as psychological counselling and support with substance abuse. Despite many policies and programmes to address these issues, there are significant gaps in the levels of support on offer and, while young people demonstrate resilience, they do suffer from the lack of capacity in their social and wider support structures.

So why is the impact of multiple government interventions not being felt? Who accesses the support that is out there? And who is looking to see whether this meets the different needs of young people?

In the early 1990s the concept of the 'lost generation' was used to explain the reality that while some young people were 'fine' and only required a small intervention to enable them to access opportunities, others would require much greater levels of support to enable them to join mainstream interventions. More recently, this framework of the continuum from 'fine' to 'lost' has been used to explore options for young people in South Africa. The terms, though, have been revised, but the argument that those young people who are dangerously disengaged need psychosocial support before they can begin to access opportunities for work and/or further education still applies.

This research would suggest the following needs to be taken into account:
(i)   the importance of the role of community organisations in enabling different cohorts of young people to be engaged, or to re-engage
(ii)  young people wish to play a role in strengthening their communities, and while many believe that government may not be doing a good job, they will still work in partnership with them to make a positive difference in their communities
(iii) despite poor access to many resources, young South Africans have high levels of access to the internet, and use the internet as the primary source of news and information.

Ways in which these issues can be addressed is returned to in the concluding section of this report.

# ASSUMPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: UNDERLYING THEIR CHOICES

The survey probed the attitudes of young people in order to understand how this informed their choices. Firstly, there is the question of culture and tradition.

**Figure 33: Culture, tradition and sense of generational issues 'agree'**
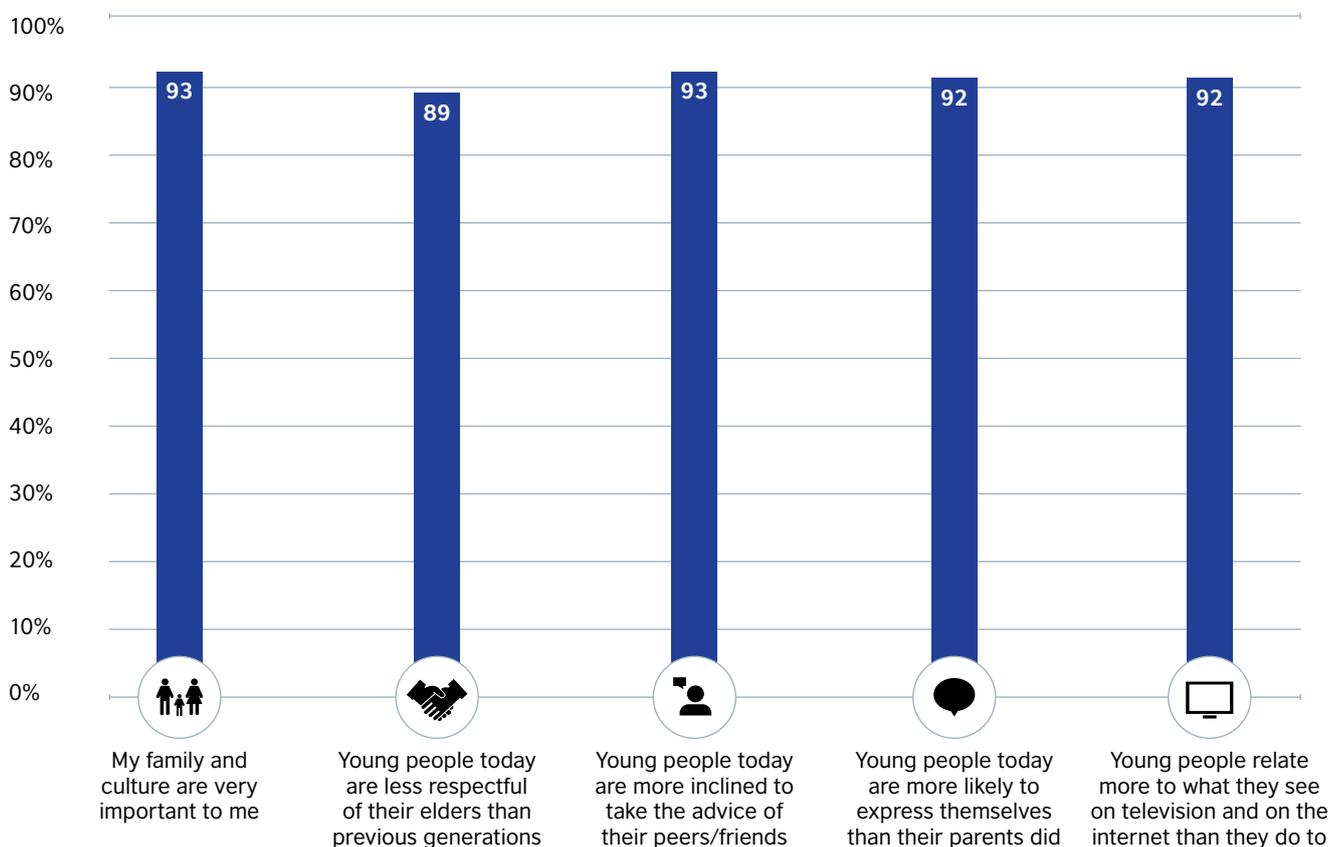


Indian/Asian youth were less likely to agree than others on the statement that 'Young people today are less respectful of their elders than previous generations' (76 per cent agreed versus 92 per cent of black Africans, 92 per cent of white people and 93 per cent of coloured people). Beyond that, there was little variance in responses across the race groups. Overwhelmingly, youth feel that tradition and culture are of great importance to them. However, they also state that their generation is less respectful of their elders than previous generations; less likely to seek their parents' advice than that of a friend/peer; are more vocal and outspoken than their parents' generation; and are more receptive to popular culture than their traditional values.

**Figure 34: Attitudes towards education**

Legend: ▉ Don't know   ▉ Agree   ▉ Disagree

| | Don't know | Agree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is no point in getting a matric | 1% | 27% | 72% |
| A technical and vocational (TVET) college qualification will help you find a job | 4% | 83% | 13% |
| Second chance matric programmes are important for young people | 2% | 93% | 5% |
| You can't get a decent job in South Africa without a university degree | 5% | 60% | 35% |
| Most young people with university degrees want to leave South Africa | 12% | 63% | 25% |

One area where they may agree with older generations is on education. Young people indicated that they believe that it is important to get a matric, and stated that the Second Chance Matric programme is important for young people. Further, the vast majority of young people believe that access to a technical and vocational (TVET) college will help to access employment. Just over 60 per cent of the young people stated that you need a university education to get a job; interestingly, many believed that those who have achieved a university degree want to leave South Africa.

This research is at odds with the national perception that young people do not value matric and TVET.

**Figure 35: Post-school ambition (young people in school only)**



Post-school ambition (young people in school only)

- 1% Other
- 1% Don't know
- 2% Enter into a learnership
- 2% Take a gap year to travel
- 3% Enter into an apprenticeship
- 3% Work so I can afford to go into studies
- 6% Start a small business
- 14% Continue to study further
- 17% Work and study
- 51% Work full time

Legend:
- ▉ Other
- ▉ Don't know
- ▉ Enter into a learnership
- ▉ Take a gap year to travel
- ▉ Enter into an apprenticeship
- ▉ Work so I can afford to go into studies
- ▉ Start a small business
- ▉ Continue to study further
- ▉ Work and study
- ▉ Work full time

When asked what they would like to do following their schooling, slightly more than half said they intend to find full-time employment. Seventeen per cent said they would like to study as well as work, while 14 per cent said they would like to continue their studies. A relatively small percentage (six per cent) expressed an interest in starting up a business, while two per cent said they would like to enter into a learnership.

**Figure 36: Would you like to start your own business? (All respondents)**



14%
11%
52%
23%

Would you like to start your own business? (All respondents)

- Yes, but not now. Only after I have some experience.
- Yes, I'd like to start a business now.
- No, I have no interest in starting a business.
- I have not thought about it.
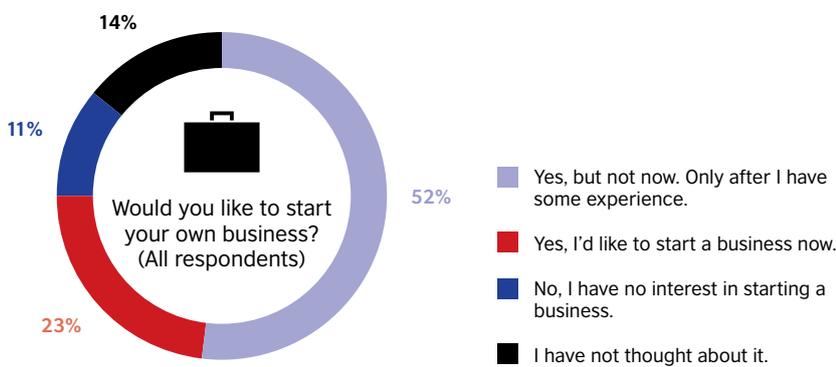
Interestingly though when all respondents were asked whether or not they would like to start their own businesses, *more than half indicated that they would, but only once they had some experience,* while 23 per cent indicated that they would like to start a business now. This increasing recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship reinforces the explanations provided by young people (highlighted previously) as to why they are optimistic about the future.

**Figure 37: Rationale for choosing area of study (all in post-school or have completed post-school)**



0.6   3   3.6   3.6   3.8   4.9   6.8   7.3   24.5   41.9

- My friends told me what to study
- My parents told me what to study
- I chose whichever course I could get a bursary for
- Other (Specify)
- Someone in my community who I respect suggested I do this
- I did not get into university so I did this
- I did not get into the course I wanted to
- Because of career guidance after school
- Because of career guidance at school
- Passionate about this field and wanted to learn more

Looking at why young people make their education choices, the greatest proportion of participants (42 per cent) said they chose/would choose their field of study because it is an area they are/were passionate about. One in four said they chose/would choose this area based on guidance they have received from a career counsellor, while 40 per cent said they chose/would choose a field of study based on advice they have received from other sources.

**Figure 38: Most important criteria in a job**



| | How much I earn | Something I'm trained to do | Work not too physically demanding | Can advance my career | Unimportant, as long as I have a job |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black African | 51 | 10 | 6 | 23 | 10 |
| White | 33 | 17 | 4 | 41 | 5 |
| Indian/Asian | 65 | | 3 | 25 | 7 |
| Coloured | 41 | 11 | 5 | 26 | 17 |
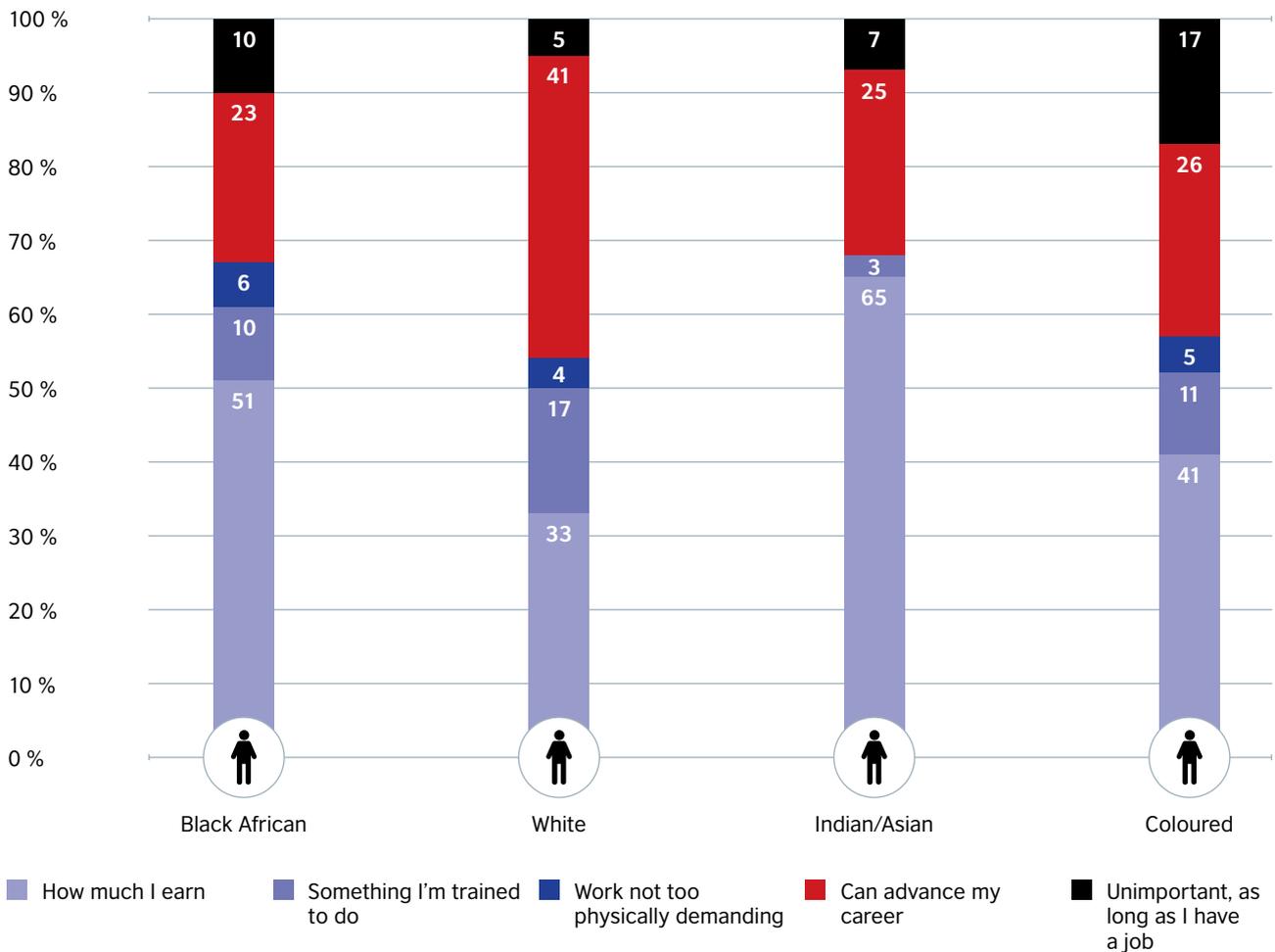
Continuing on the theme of choice, respondents were asked about what guided their career choices. The majority (except for white young people) indicated that earning power was the most important criterion. So while educational choices are predominantly guided by personal passions, more practical thinking comes into play later on.

Young people were then asked why they felt it was so difficult to access employment. One in three said government is not creating a sufficient number of jobs, while just under 25 per cent highlighted inadequate education needed to access employment.
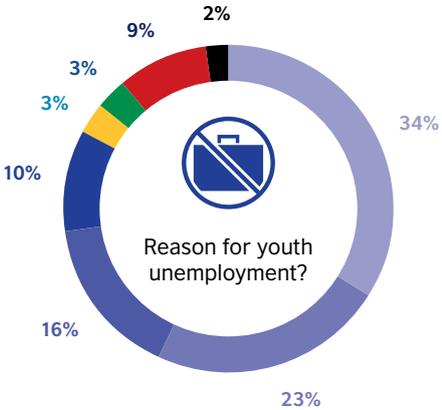
**Figure 39: What do you think is the single most important reason for youth unemployment?**

- 34% Government is not creating jobs
- 23% Inadequate education that is needed to access employment
- 16% Young people not prepared to work for low salaries
- 10% Foreigners from other African countries taking jobs
- 3% Foreigners from other continents are taking jobs
- 3% The jobs available are not attractive for young people
- 9% The global economy is bad
- 2% Other

Few South African youth seek to blame outside forces, such as the global recession or migration. Only a small proportion viewed the idea that foreigners were taking jobs away from South Africans as the single most important reason for youth unemployment. This idea (a factor in triggering South Africa's xenophobic violence, and explored further in the following section of this report) is debunked by the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC),[48] which found that only four per cent of people of working age currently in South Africa were estimated to have been born outside the country. MiWORC also notes that foreign-born workers were 'much more likely than locally-born to work in the informal sector and in precarious employment'.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree to a series of statements relating to the factors that either enable or hinder young people from accessing employment.

**Figure 40: Perceptions of racism, sexism, nepotism and gender roles (those who agreed with statements only)**



| | Black African | White | Indian/Asian | Coloured | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| There is racial discrimination in the workplace | 67% | 52% | 61% | 56% | 59% |
| There is sexual discrimination in the workplace | 58% | 50% | 41% | 51% | 50% |
| Government only gives opportunities to people they know | 62% | 62% | 62% | 56% | 60% |
| Private companies only give opportunities to people they know | 57% | 52% | 62% | 56% | 57% |

**Figure 40: Perceptions of racism, sexism, nepotism and gender roles (those who agreed with statements only)**



| | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| There is racial discrimination in the workplace | 68% | 61% |
| There is sexual discrimination in the workplace | 60% | 53% |
| Government only gives opportunities to people they know | 62% | 60% |
| Private companies only give opportunities to people they know | 58% | 55% |
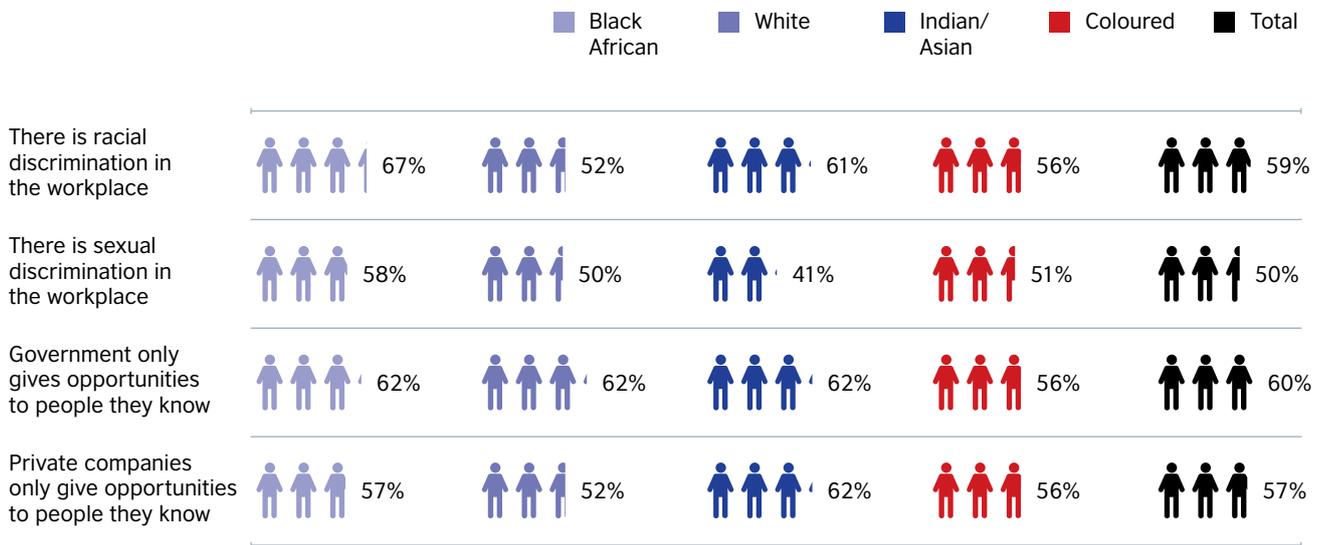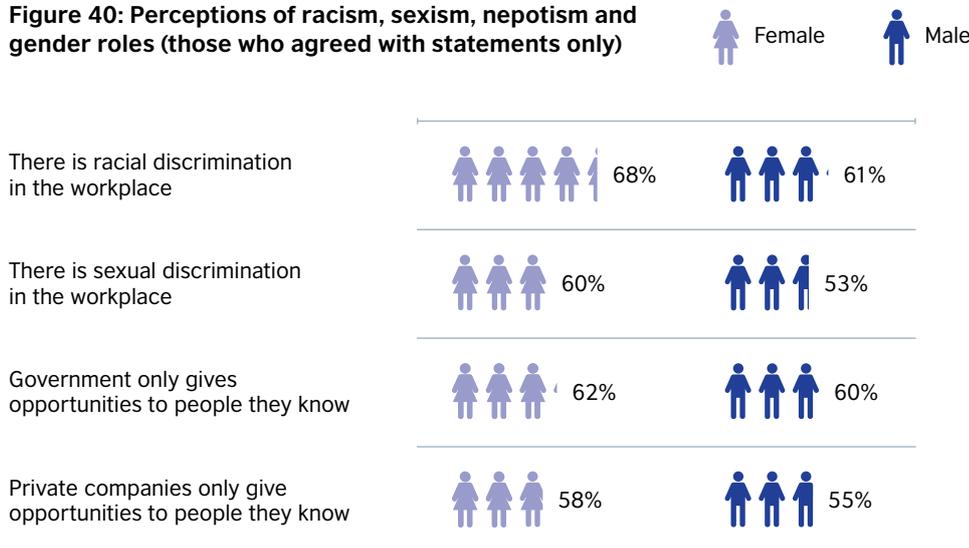
When asked about the importance of knowing someone in the private sector, there was minimal variation in responses given across the two groups (race, gender). Overall, 60 per cent of respondents thought that knowing someone within government was a determinant in terms of who may be employed. This is in fact consistent with the view, posited earlier in this report, which indicates that networks are critical to accessing employment particularly for entry-level jobs.

With respect to the questions about discrimination: Africans and females were most likely to agree with the statement that: 'There is racial discrimination in the workplace', while white respondents were marginally least likely to agree with this statement. Indian respondents were least likely to agree with the statement that there is sexual discrimination in the workplace, while women were only marginally more likely than men to agree with this statement. More than 20 years into South Africa's democracy, there remains a percentage of young people who feel that there is both racial and sexual discrimination in the workplace.

## 19. What this says about South African youth

This section begins by reminding us how young people are shifting and that their points of reference are changing. When it comes to the choices young people make regarding education and employment, we see the pragmatic nature of young people. While they may choose their study based on passion, many young people (particularly black young people) ultimately have to make decisions about employment based on what they will earn. It also highlights that many young people would be open to starting a business, but believe that they need experience prior to starting such a venture.

> # YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

This section considers the perceptions of young people of foreigners (from other countries in Africa, as well as other countries across the globe), as well as their preferences for countries they either have or would like to visit, study in and work in. It also explores the influence of UK culture on young people in South Africa.

**Figure 41: Attitudes towards foreigners in South Africastatements)**



Legend:
- Foreigners from other African countries take jobs away from South Africans
- Foreigners from other African countries bring value to the country, such as skills
- Foreigners from other African countries are responsible for the increase in crime
- I have no problem with foreigners from other African countries
- None of these
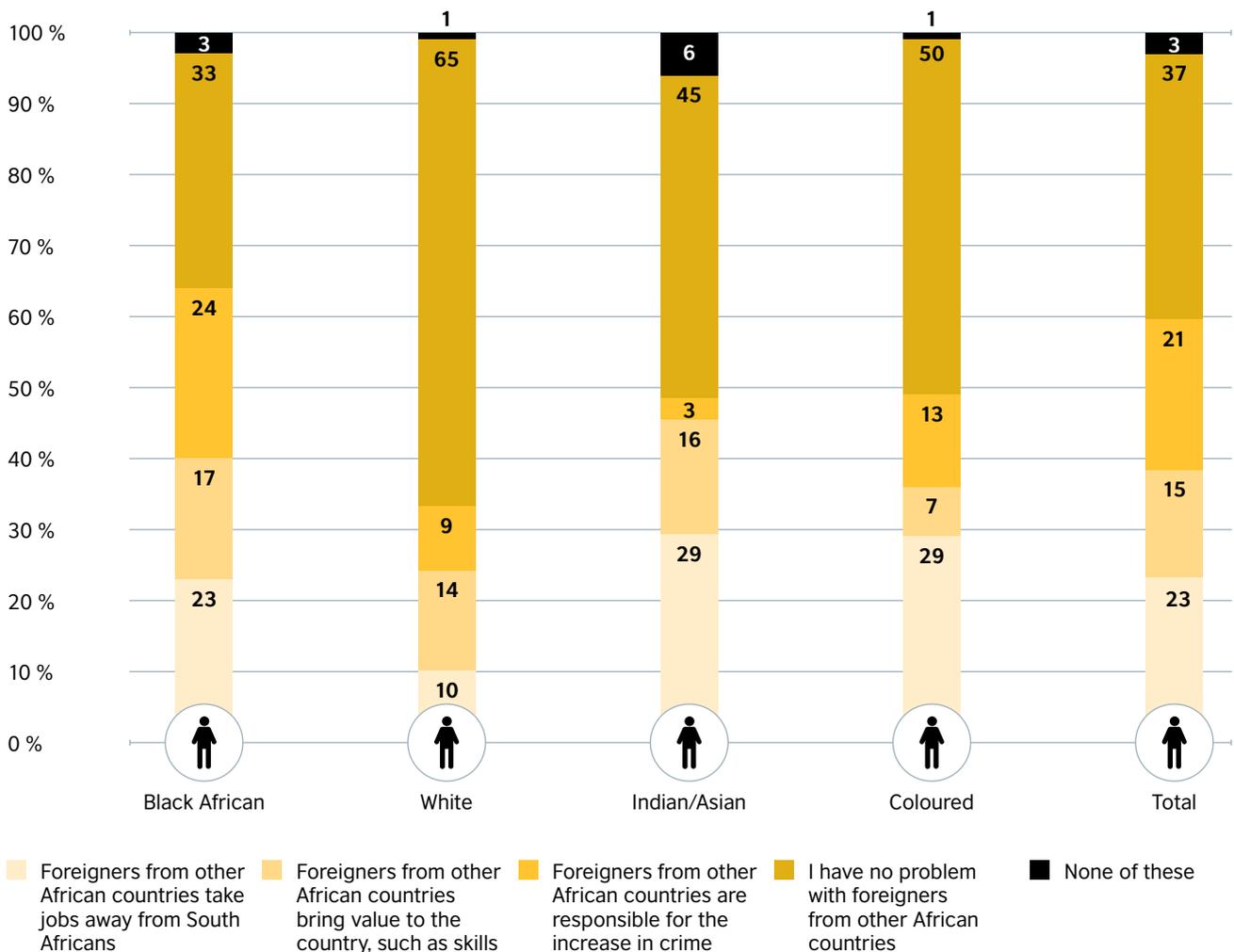
We have already seen that the vast majority of South African youth do not feel that immigrants are taking their jobs. Thirty-seven per cent said they have no problem with foreigners from Africa living in South Africa; some state that foreigners from other African countries bring value, such as skills. However, one in five said they felt foreigners were responsible for an increase in crime. And some do feel they take away jobs. As is so often the case, immigrant workers are often based in informal settlements, where employment is most precarious, and it is in these areas where much of the xenophobic violence shown to foreigners had erupted.

**Figure 42: Have you visited a country outside of South Africa before? (Yes responses)**
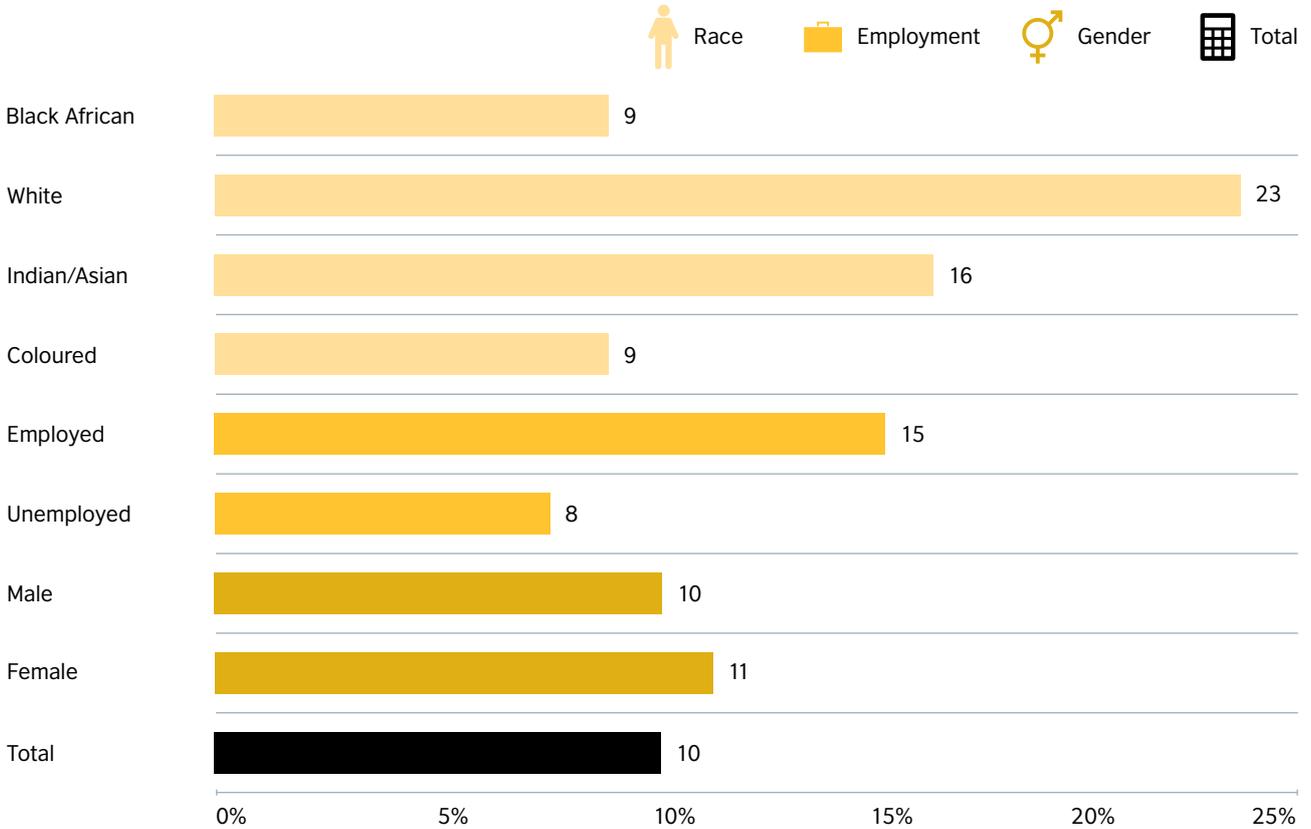


Having looked at South African views of immigrants, respondents were asked about their experiences abroad. White respondents were significantly more likely than other races to have visited a foreign country. Similarly, those in employment were more likely to have travelled outside of the country. Young people were also asked which countries they would like to visit, work in, study in and live in, given the choice. This was an open-ended question in which respondents could list any country of their choice. The figure below provides data on the top eight choices emerging:

**Figure 43: Interest in foreign countries (top eight choices – open ended)**
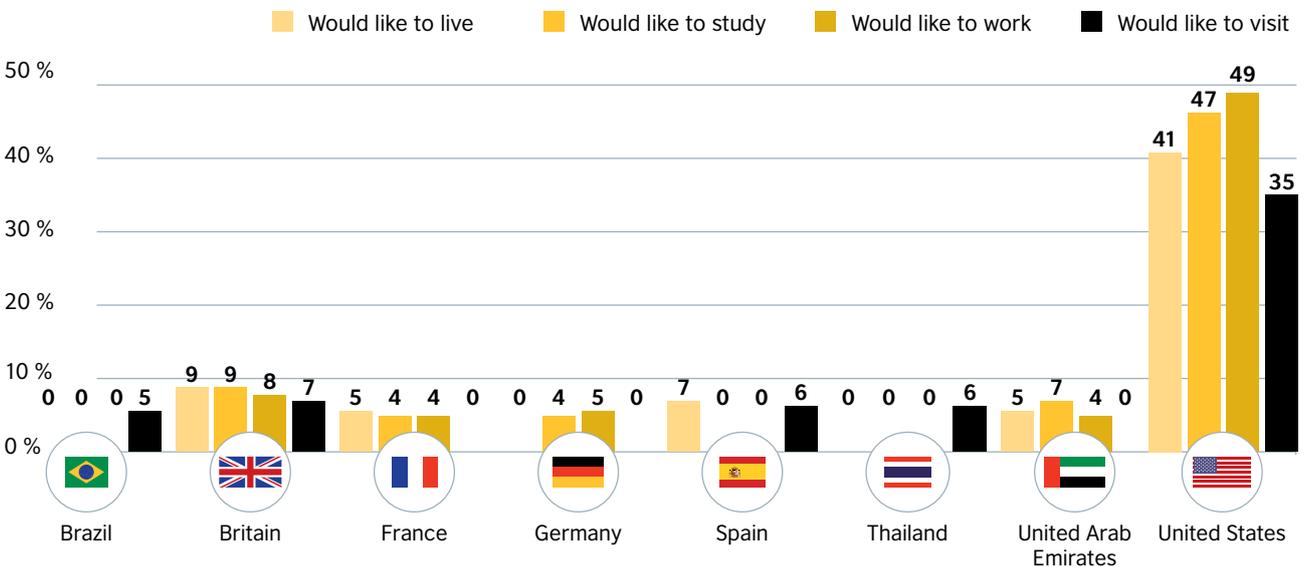
The United States emerges as, by far, the most desirable country, with the UK and the UAE some way behind. Rosenburg (2002) posits that American culture – and African-American culture in particular – has 'played a significant role in the construction of identity, popular culture, and the struggle for equality in Southern Africa' and that young people from Lesotho and South Africa 'identify with aspects of American culture that provide them with new meanings, which help negotiate their landscape' (Rosenburg, 2002, page 1).[49] The author considers the importance of rap in shaping black youths' identities in the US, and indicates that 'part of rap music's popularity among African-American youth stems from its lyrics, which address their political and economic realities' (Rosenburg, 2002, page 5). Rap culture, in turn, started to become more accessible to young people in South Africa in the 1990s, and Rosenburg indicates that 'Africans living in South Africa and Lesotho have not only appropriated these aspects of rap identity, but have also incorporated it into their own sociopolitical identity' (Rosenburg, 2002, page 7). This identification with the struggles of black American youth offers one compelling reason behind the attraction the United States holds for many young South Africans.

**Figure 44: Influence of UK culture on youth**
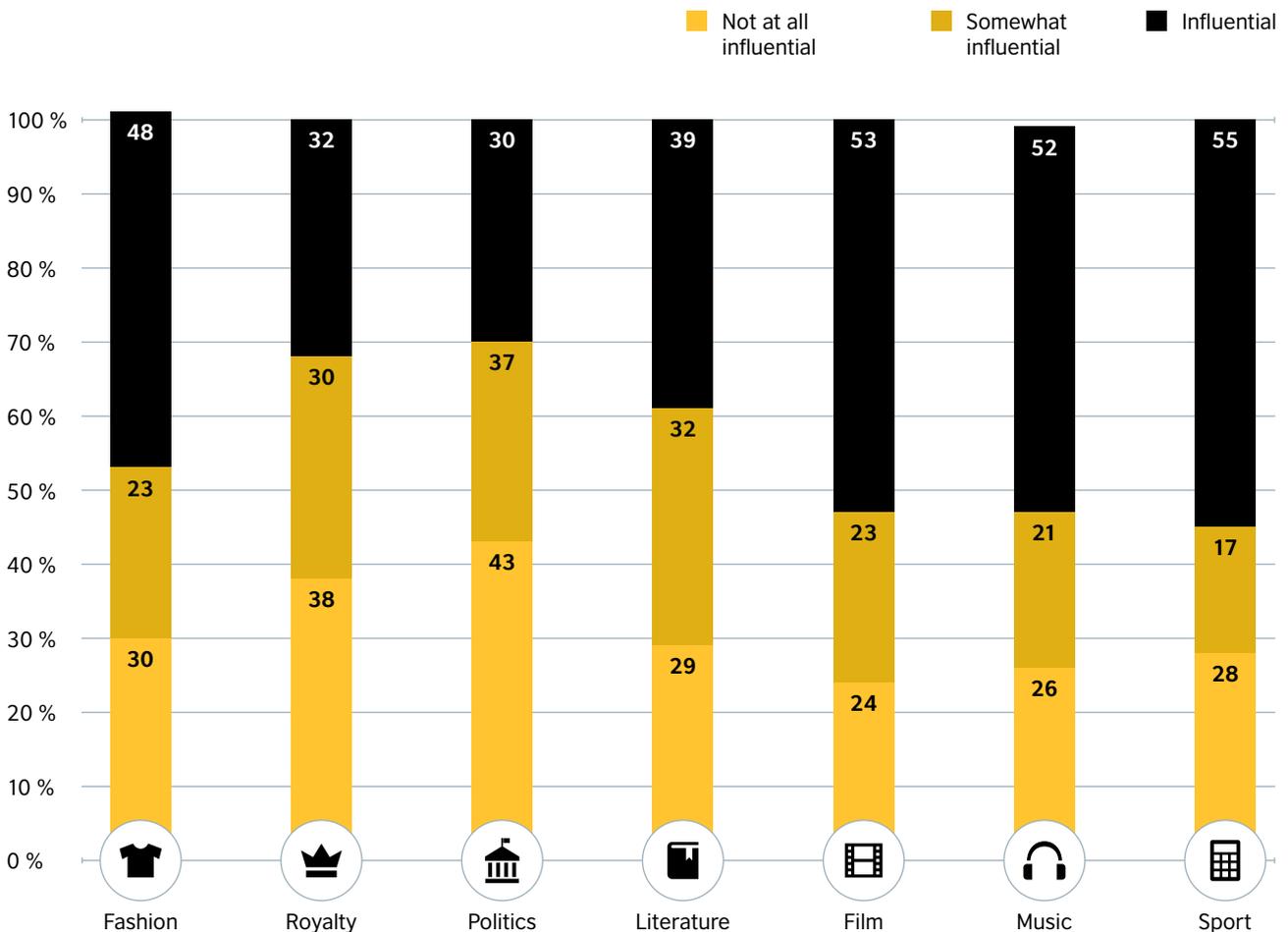


Respondents were also asked to identify the degree to which British culture impacted or influenced their lives. Sport, film and music were cited by the majority (52 per cent – 55 per cent) as being influential on their lives, while politics was considered to be the least influential.
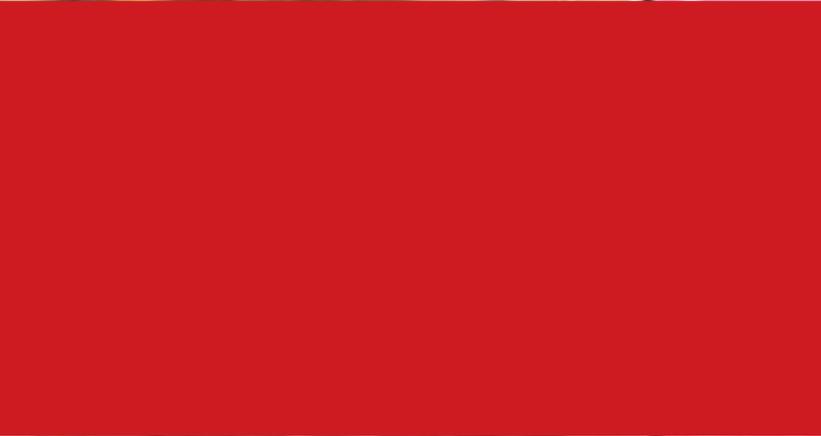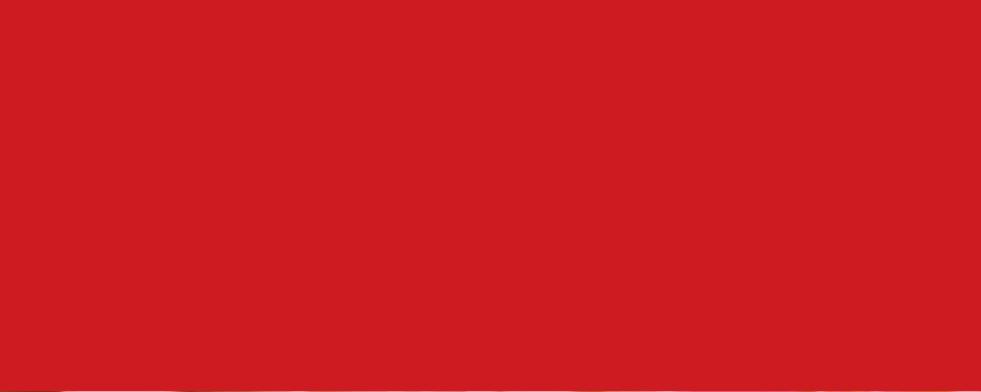
# > CONCLUSION: FASHIONING A NEW 'YOUTHSCAPE'

'Most of us, when you make it, you regard yourself as a survivor. When out of the harsh environment and hard circumstances, if we make it out of this, we see ourselves as a survivor. With my guys, success is something we talk about from an academic perspective. You have graduated, finished tertiary. I have become a success. But surviving is to get out of these very harsh conditions we have described in Orange Farm.' Focus group participant

This report has highlighted the challenges facing young people, including household poverty, unemployment, crime, violence and substance abuse. It has noted the fact that, despite high participation rates in schooling, young people face real difficulties in achieving qualifications. It has further illustrated the ways in which race, gender and geographic location (especially rural areas and informal settlements) impact the economic opportunities of young people.

The report highlights that the primary risk in the country is that of the high level of inequality, the growing levels of unemployment, and the implications of this in terms of young people's ability to transition successfully into independence and adulthood.

Next Generation South Africa has found that young people are optimistic, resilient and have a strong sense of their own agency. They are aware of their own role in changing their lives, and in working within the community to support change. It is also reflected on their willingness to access networks, seek support and make pragmatic choices, demonstrating an ability to adapt in the context of adversity and to 'navigate their ways to resources that will sustain, and/or improve, their welfare' (Theron, 2012).[50] As eloquently phrased by Honwana, 'waithood is creative; young people have not

resigned themselves to the hardships of their situation, but are using their agency and creativity to fashion new 'youthscapes' or sub-cultures with alternative forms of livelihood and social relationships in the margins of mainstream society'. (Honwana, 2012, citing Maria and Soep, 2005, page 26).[51]

Honwana observes that young people have found their own terms to describe the precarious nature of their lives: in Senegal and Tunisia young people refer to desenrascar a vida (i.e. 'eke out a living' in Portuguese) or débrouillage (i.e. 'making do' in French), while young South Africans speak about 'just getting by'. Thus, while not negating the strongly articulated need for government to create the space and provide support to young people, this reinforces that young people have the capacity to make a plan and find opportunities, and this is strongly expressed by young people in this research.

This final section of the report reflects on what factors are central to enabling young people to access the economy, on the support structures that have been identified as important and the policies and programmes in place to address their needs. It concludes by outlining recommendations about ways to utilise the learning from this research to refine the interventions put in place to allow young people to continue to have both dignity and dreams.



A mural in a youth centre in an informal township in Gauteng

> 'When you survive it is like you get R10 for food. When you are successful, you go to McDonalds and buy whatever you want. Steers. Every day.' Focus group participant

## 20.  Understanding how to support improved employment outcomes

This report has emphasised the importance of accessing economic opportunities; it has reflected the challenges that young people face when seeking to access employment. It has demonstrated that while many young people are finding opportunities in their communities that allow them to earn money, the majority would prefer to first work, and then potentially establish a business that goes beyond survivalist.

A review of policies and programmes relating to youth employment in South Africa illustrates that there are a myriad of policies and programmes that have been put in place by government, together with its social partners. These focus on ways to support and enable economic growth in a manner that mitigates the impact of poverty, unemployment and exclusion and on interventions that enable young people to develop the abilities and networks required to access to the labour market.

They include: school to study or work transitional programmes; programmes focused on enhancing work readiness and supporting work placement; programmes supporting the development of occupational competence (learnerships, artisanships, graduate development), those enabling entrepreneurial development; and those that create public employment opportunities (Marock, July 2013).[52] Recent studies highlight the level of resources allocated to addressing these issues –government alone has an annual expenditure of R 16,879,109,750 focused on addressing these challenge (and this excludes the amounts spent on schooling and higher education).[53]

Yet despite these efforts youth unemployment is increasing and interventions to change this situation are not yielding the intended impact. While the low rate of economic growth is of course the primary obstacle, this section seeks to explore which factors have emerged as most important, through this research process, in determining whether young people access employment. Understanding this is seen as critical to shaping and refining interventions.

We therefore considered the different factors that have been highlighted in this report as impacting on the ability of young people to access employment – including factors that relate to who the young people are – such as age, gender and race, where young people live and whether it has been possible to access education and the choices that young people are making with respect to setting goals and joining community organisations and volunteering.

In order to understand which factors were most important to enabling young people to access employment so as to inform policy and programme decisions, Singizi reviewed these factors that seemed to impact on employment outcomes using a CHAID model[54] (noting that race was not used as a variable in this analysis because the nature of the sample would lead to a skewed result. Nonetheless, it is evident that race remains a key factor in determining education, as well as employment outcomes and thus needs to be considered when shaping interventions).

A more detailed breakdown of the findings emerging from this analysis is provided as an appendix but, in brief, the following emerged with respect to the factors that most effect the ability of young people to access employment.

It emerged that, while all young people struggle to access employment, **the age of the young person** is a factor, and older respondents (aged between 25 and 34) are more likely to be employed than younger people (aged between 15 and 24). **Gender** is also a factor, and men are approximately 1.5 times more likely to be employed than women.

Beyond race, age and gender, what emerged as the next most important factor in determining employment is whether a young person is a **member of an organisation or secures another form of workplace experience.** The analysis suggests that organisational membership among younger participants emerged as an important determinant of employment. Alternatively, if the individual had work experience, but was not affiliated to an organisation, the size of the employment pool was approximately the same as for those who had organisational membership.

Interestingly, the next most important factor is whether the young people have defined **career goals,** as employed youth were 1.2 times more likely to have career goals and know how to reach them than unemployed youth.

Perhaps surprising is that where the young person lives **(urban or rural areas)** and their level of **education** – while important factors – only followed after the factors outlined above.

These findings reinforce the extent to which age, gender and location, as well as race, impact on employment. This serves to amplify the importance of policies and interventions that address the barriers to access faced by particular cohorts of young people (that is, black youth - in particular women, and including those from locations where there is limited access to the formal sector. This includes the rural areas, as well as informal areas within more urban environments). However, these findings also highlight the importance of personal and collective agency among youth, and the value of and need for government to more strongly support community organisations and incentives that expand access to work experience. In making these observations, we should also remember the types of support that young people have themselves indicated they require for their wellbeing, and the ways in which they are able to access this information and

# 21. Recommendations

assistance. Furthermore, policymakers need to recognise the goals young people have – in terms of further studies, employment and self-employment – and the balance they need to find between passion and pragmatism.

There is a need to continue efforts, at policy and programme level, to ensure that workplaces create opportunities for those young people who are marginalised from the labour market. This research suggests that while the numbers knocking on the doors of the placement agencies are significant, many young people are not aware of the organisations that are successfully enabling this alignment between supply (young people) and demand (the economy). **Ways to ensure that this information is available, and that young people are supported to reach out to these organisations, should be explored.**

Location as a key factor in determining employment outcomes, and transport as a real barrier to job seeking, underlines the importance of rethinking local economies. This suggests that there is a need to consider how to expand the number of communities in which the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Community Works Programme (CWP) are implemented (notwithstanding that it is already the largest employment programme in South Africa). Given the willingness of young people to initiate small businesses once they have acquired experience, there is also a need to consider how young people transition from these programmes into other opportunities and, in particular, the kinds of social entrepreneurship opportunities that could be supported. These could, in turn, address some of the demands for support that government is not able to provide (for example, expanding the services of organisations working with substance abuse by bringing young people in to augment this service). This should be complemented by other entrepreneurial initiatives where there is a clear value chain, and possibilities for finance and logistical support for these entrepreneurs.

This research shows the importance of the focus on workplace experience, and reinforces the value of many of the initiatives underway. However, the finding in this research that community organisations are critical both to building young people's resilience and enabling young people to access employment is one that allows for new ways of thinking about workplace experience. **Growing the number of young people able to volunteer in community organisations should be prioritised,** including through the EPWP non-state sector grant, which funds civil society and extends their capacity to take on volunteers and pay them stipends. This is important both as a way of strengthening communities, and expanding the services provided by these civil society and community-based organisations, while simultaneously increasing the employability of young people.

The recognition of the importance of young people having goals and knowing how to reach these is also important in shaping interventions. Firstly, this insight can usefully guide selection processes for programmes where there are only a limited number of opportunities – that is, the programme can seek candidates that demonstrate personal agency, optimism and resilience more strongly. There are examples of good practices in this regard, such as the selection process for the Dell Young Leaders Programme. Secondly, programmes can explore how best to develop these attributes. These cannot be answered by 'teaching' young people how to set a goal and make a plan in a formal teaching environment (such as the current life orientation programmes in schools) but, rather, these attributes would need to be developed in the way a programme is run, and the experiences that the young person goes through in this programme.

This suggests a **stronger focus on building the skills that allow young people to internalise these goals and plans, develop an understanding of the importance of connections and, in so doing, build their sense of personal agency and resilience.**

This report has highlighted that the crisis in South Africa is one of inequality. While many young people continue to vote and discuss politics, there are concerns about the extent to which these activities are building the democratic project. If young people cannot access economic opportunities and participate as fulfilled and active citizens, they remain in a suspended state and miss out on the freedoms they should own by right.

The young people represented in this report share – as a primary concern – the desire to study and to be able to access the economy. They also wish to be free of violence, noting the particularly high levels of gender-based violence, gang membership and substance abuse that destroys the fabrics of their communities.
They desire to do what young people wish to do worldwide: watch television, listen to music and imagine their futures. But while they have much in common with their peers, around the world and in South Africa, they are not all the same. They have different educational levels, varying levels of social connections, come from different places and carry their own dreams. When reflecting on these findings, it is vital to ensure the

interventions that are designed and implemented do not just target those young people that are 'fine', but that they also ensure that those who are dangerously disengaged are able to receive support.

Finally, the key message in this report is that the challenge is to find ways to enable young people to act positively on the belief that they are responsible for their own lives, and that there are mechanisms to enable them to access opportunities. There is a need to bring these opportunities closer to the community, and to create pathways within and across communities, to support greater inclusivity. Many policy discussions are focusing on ways to build these pathways, create inclusive growth in the formal sector and, as importantly, within the community. This report shows that young people will be ready and willing partners in this grand plan.

>

The young people represented in this report share – as a primary concern – the desire to study and to be able to access the economy. They also wish to be free of violence, noting the particularly high levels of gender-based violence, gang membership and substance abuse that destroys the fabrics of their communities.

# > APPENDIX 1: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

This report has already highlighted some of the interventions in place to support young people, and also that many young people state they do not have access to these resources. This appendix provides an overview of the programmes and policies already in place to address the challenges facing young people in South Africa. It also highlights the national policies in place that intend to create an enabling environment for the implementation of these programmes.

Table 6: Youth labour market transition programmes – enabling policy and legislation

| Type of programme | Specific programmes | Enabling policy and legislation |
|---|---|---|
| **Public employment programmes** | EPWP and CWP | • Cabinet Memo 2003 approving the implementation of EPWP.<br>• Ministerial Determination and the Code of Good Practice for Expanded Public Works Programme.<br>• Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Institutional Arrangement Framework, (2012).<br>• NGP and NDP.<br>• Municipal level EPWP policy.<br>• Divisions of Revenue Act. |
| | NYS (including NARYSEC) | • National Youth Policy: youth and community service.<br>• National Youth Service Development Policy: participation of youth in volunteering through the NYS.<br>• The Youth Accord. |
| **Entrepreneurial development programmes** | Supplier development /value chain development<br><br>Micro and small business development<br><br>Social entrepreneurship | • Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2012–2023.<br>• Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act.<br>• Commencement of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act.<br>• Public Investment Corporation Act 23.<br>• There are processes in place to consider legislation with respect to the social economy (this is likely to support existing policies on local economic development). |

| Type of programme | Specific programmes | Enabling policy and legislation |
|---|---|---|
| **Placement programmes** | Assessment, matching and placement initiatives run by public sector as well as non-government (private placement agencies typically exclude many of the young people discussed in this research).<br><br>There are initiatives such as those implemented by the libraries as well as organisations such as Harambee to provide access to WiFi (for some of the cohorts that go through the programme to enable job search).<br><br>There are initiatives to allow young people to travel for free during certain hours of the day to reduce the cost of job seeking. | • Advocacy for zero rated internet to support job search.<br>• There are a number of pilots to explore the possibility of free transport and the policy implications thereof.<br>• Employment Tax Incentive Act.<br>• Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act.<br>• Commencement of the Broad-Based Black. Economic Empowerment Amendment Act |
| **Work readiness programmes** | Personal mastery.<br>Workplace readiness.<br>Workplace experience. | • National Youth Policy: public and private sectors to provide workplace learning opportunities.<br>• Employment: tax incentive for employers hiring youth.<br>• White Paper on Post Schooling: personal mastery, work readiness, work experience as well as increased access to community education and TVET.<br>• DHET Strategic Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20.<br>• DHET Work Place-Based Learning Policy.<br>• Youth Employment Scheme (currently being designed by business and government with the intention of creating one million opportunities for young people to access workplace experience). |
| **Skills development and TVET programmes** | Occupational programmes (learnership/ apprenticeship/ part qualification | • White Paper on Post Schooling: linking education and the workplace through apprenticeships and learnerships.<br>• QCTO 2014 Strategy Plan.<br>• OQSF Policy.<br>• The Skills Development Act.<br>• The Skills Development Levies Act.<br>• Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act.<br>• Commencement of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act. |

| Type of programme | Specific programmes | Enabling policy and legislation |
|---|---|---|
| | TVET programmes (NCV programmes and N1 – N6). | • White Paper on Post Schooling: Strengthening / expanding TVET colleges.<br>• Further Education and Training Act and Amendment Act.<br>• The National Skills Accord. |
| **Second chance programmes** | CET programmes, second chance matric and foundational learning programmes. | • National Youth Policy: second chances to complete education.<br>• White Paper on Post Schooling: community colleges to cater for youth who never completed school. |
| **School-based initiatives** | Subject support, career guidance, and entrepreneurship training. | • Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2012–2023. |
| **Community building programmes** | Sport, art and recreation and youth organisations. | • National Youth Policy: government provision of professional youth workers; planned sport, recreation, arts and culture activities.<br>• Sport and Recreation White Paper.<br>• Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture Strategic Plan.<br>• Non-profit organisations Act, 1997. |
| **Social services** | Drug and crime rehabilitation, trauma support, HIV/AIDs counselling, youth and gender based violence | • National Youth Policy: government provision of professional youth workers.<br>• Framework for Social Welfare Services (2011).<br>• National Drug Master Plan 2013 – 2017.<br>• White Paper on Corrections in South Africa.<br>• National Crime Prevention Strategy.<br>• National Strategic Plan on HIV, STIs, and TB 2012-2016.<br>• Children's Act and Amendment (2005).<br>• Prevention and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act (2008).<br>• Social Service Professions Act and Amendments (1995). |

In order to understand which factors were most important to enabling young people to access employment to inform policy and programme decisions, Singizi reviewed these factors that seemed to impact on employment outcomes using a CHAID model (noting that race was not used as a variable in this analysis because the nature of the sample would lead to a skewed result. Nonetheless, it is evident that race remains a key factor in determining education, as well as employment outcomes and thus needs to be considered when shaping interventions). An analysis of these findings is provided below.

**Age of respondents**

As previously indicated, older respondents (aged between 25 and 34) are more likely to be employed than younger people (aged between 15 and 24). Respondents were 2.3 times more likely to be unemployed than employed. Older respondents were marginally more likely (53.6 per cent to 46.4 per cent) to be employed than unemployed. Thus, in this CHAID algorithm, age emerged as a strong determinant of employment status.

**Gender**

Overall, men (53.7 per cent) are approximately 1.5 times more likely to be employed than women (36.6 per cent). The ratio of employed men to women increases among older respondents, and gender emerged as the second most significant factor for employment opportunities among older respondents.

**Membership of an organisation/ workplace experience**

Organisational membership among younger participants emerged as an important determinant of employment. Alternatively, if the individual had work experience, but was not affiliated to an organisation, the size of the employment pool was approximately the same as for those who had organisational membership.

Thus, for those affiliated to an organisation, work experience is deemed less important than for those who did not belong to any organisation. This is possibly attributable to the fact that organisations, societies and other affiliations in and of themselves lend the individual a degree of structure and direction.

### Career goals

Employed youth were 1.2 times more likely to have career goals and know how to reach them than unemployed youth. On the other hand, unemployed youth were twice as more likely than those who were employed to say they had no goals and would 'wait and see what happens'. For those who said 'they don't have goals, or have goals, but weren't sure how to reach them' the likelihood of employment was lower than for those with goals who knew how to meet them (approximately ten per cent versus 25 per cent).

### Enumerator area (urban/rural)

Location, in terms of the rural/urban divide, emerged as a factor for employment among older respondents (aged 25–34). Location was highlighted as a feature for both women and male respondents and women and men from urban areas were significantly more likely to be employed than those from rural areas. Also, men who reside in urban areas were significantly more likely to be employed than men from rural areas.

### Education

Education emerged as a factor in the CHAID algorithm, but only among older respondents, and only with regard to men. Thus, in the cases of men who have a higher education (matric, degree, diploma), employment was generally higher, but was also dependent on enumerator area and affiliation to an organisation. For those with little or limited education, (none, primary, Grade 10, 11), the employment pool for this group is about 50 per cent.
In summary, certain of the factors that emerge as significant in this analysis reinforce the extent to which age, gender and location, as well as race, impact on employment. This serves to amplify the importance of policies and interventions that address the barriers to access faced by particular cohorts of young people (that is, black youth – in particular women, and including those from locations where there is limited access to the formal sector. This includes the rural areas, as well as informal areas within more urban environments).

The other factors that emerge in this analysis as important include: whether an individual is a member of a community organisation and/or has had work experience, that the individual has a sense of agency (as evidenced by their setting of goals and determining what they will need to do to realise these goals and then their education attainments). These factors are, in turn, vital to the process of making decisions about the kinds of interventions that should be put in place to improve the employment outcomes of young people. In making these observations, we should also remember the types of support that young people have themselves indicated they require for their well-being, and the ways in which they are able to access this information and assistance. Furthermore, policymakers need to recognise the goals young people have – in terms of further studies, employment and self-employment – and the balance they need to find between passion and pragmatism.

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51 > Honwana, A (2012) 'Desenrascar a vida': Youth Employment and Transitions to Adulthood. Paper prepared for the III Conference of IESE Maputo.

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54 > CHAID (Chi-square model automatic interaction detection) can be used for prediction (in a similar fashion to regression analysis) as well as classification, and for detection of interaction between variables. It is a technique whose original intent was to detect interaction between variables (i.e., find 'combination' variables) and recursively partition a population into separate and distinct groups, which are defined by a set of independent (predictor) variables, such that the CHAID objective is met: the variance of the dependent (target) variable is minimised within the groups, and maximised across the groups.

# NOTE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

There is a palpable sense of renewal in South Africa today. Just at the moment this research is being published, a new President and Government is taking control of Africa's largest economy, and hopes are high that together they will set about tackling the systemic issues that are restraining economic growth and driving youth unemployment to record highs.

The youth population in South Africa is booming, like in most other parts of Africa, and our context makes this Next Generation research all the more important in guiding and informing the work of the British Council. It has already helped us understand more acutely the aspirations of those we want to work with most, the next generation of young South Africans, the born-frees'; those who are the first of the Ramaphosa era.

As we approach our 60th Anniversary in South Africa the British Council is proud of the fact that it has been here, and open to all, throughout the dark years of Apartheid to the present day of new possibilities, and always with the same core purpose of creating 'a friendly knowledge and understanding' between the peoples of our countries. To do that properly, we ourselves need to understand things here.

This report is a fascinating, accessible read and while it confirms some things we already knew intuitively – that young aspirant South Africans have drive and feel able to change things -  we also learn so much about the attitudes and behaviours of young people:  There's a conservatism when it comes to types of employment people are targeting: The absence of equity is biting:  And despite all the recent turmoil in Government, cynicism is not prevalent – young people still look to their 'seniors' to lead the transformation of society.

Our role as the UK's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities is to connect people in South Africa and the UK through programmes of activity ranging from multi-million Rand partnerships in Higher Education, the Skills sector and English language development right the way across the spectrum to creating new opportunities for artists to share and learn and create with each other. Importantly, in the last 2 years we have begun to work with social and digital entrepreneurs to connect them with the networks and skills they need to build their businesses and sustain livelihoods. We work in townships and rural schools, urban galleries and tech hubs.

The British Council's work in South Africa always starts with partnerships and results in mutually beneficial outcomes. I would like to thank Singizi for their expertise, and my team – Yani Horn and Shavaughn Haack for their dedication to this work. Special thanks to Christine Wilson and Jo Beall who inspired and guided us.

I hope that you enjoy this report and return to it in your 'need to know' moments like I do.  All that it teaches us will echo in our work in the months and years to come.

— *Colm McGivern*
Director South Africa
**British Council**

Next Generation is a research programme that gathers data to explore the needs, potential, and aspirations of young people globally.

**The overall aim of Next Generation is:**

> Understanding youth attitudes and aspirations

> Amplifying youth voice

> Supporting better youth policy-making

The study seeks to analyse the conditions that support young people and allow them to reach their potential as fulfilled, productive and active citizens.

Research is initiated in countries that are experiencing a period of significant change, with the purpose of ensuring that young people's voices are heard and their interests properly represented in decisions that will have lasting implications for their lives.

The research is always completed with a series of recommendations based on supporting policy change.