



# SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH MANIFESTO 2019

## A YOUTH MANDATE TO POLITICAL PARTIES

EMPOWERED BY

**youthlab**





## FOREWORD

As a youth policy think-tank, Youth Lab has, over the past six years, worked tirelessly towards building a South Africa and Africa that values, respects and includes the contributions of young people. Founded as a non-partisan organisation, Youth Lab has continued to find new ways to inspire young people to share their experiences, thoughts, expectations and actions to enrich political and policy decision-making processes in Africa.

Our team is also committed to demonstrating to political and non-political leaders that while ensuring youth participation requires aptitude, effort and courage, it is not only possible, but a necessary part of the public discourse and actions to realise the goal of a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

The South African Youth Manifesto is a book project aligned with Youth Lab's core values: participation, inclusion and accountability. During the 2014 and 2016 elections, Youth Lab's election projects focused on using our convening power to bring political parties into direct contact with young people. This, to our minds, provided young people with a unique and valuable opportunity to hear firsthand what parties had to offer them in their manifestos.

While having the ear of political parties is good, we quickly learned from those interventions that young people deserve more than the opportunity to be passive receivers of manifesto promises; they deserve the opportunity to tell politicians what they, as the largest and most important population group in the country, want from their elected leaders. Youth Lab firmly believes the youth can set the agenda rather than simply respond to it, and that they must be at the decision-making table, instead of on the menu.

The South African Youth Manifesto is a mandate from young people to politicians, giving parties valuable insights into the priorities, vision, interventions and youth roles as directly articulated by youth. It is a model that should guide parties toward an elective promise and governance offering that takes South Africa into its future. #SAYouthManifesto is a movement that brings together the voices of young South Africans, amplifying their needs and shining a light on their collective

potential. This manifesto is a tool that young South African can use to influence politics, shape policy and sharpen post-election accountability.

In compiling this manifesto, Youth Lab engaged with young people from all South African provinces. From rural Mpumalanga to the townships of the Western Cape, The South African Youth Manifesto canvases and integrates the views of young people - potential voters in 2019, teaching them about the electoral system while helping them practice policy making. This manifesto intentionally does four important things: 1) Provides an analysis of South African social and political issues as prioritised by youth, 2) Puts forward a vision of the South Africa youth want, 3) Proposes practical interventions to realise that vision, and 4) Puts forward suggestions for the roles that young people can play in these interventions.

This manifesto demonstrates that if asked, young people know what they want and consider themselves capable contributors to the development of South Africa. Young South Africans have accepted the challenge to set the agenda for the 2019 elections. #SAYouthManifesto is the voice of the youth, entrusted to Youth Lab to communicate. We implore political parties to hear this voice. We challenge politicians take seriously the mandate of young people. In 2019, may South Africa place youth at the centre of its politics and custodians of its power.

Tessa Dooms

Managing Director, Youth Lab

## Acknowledgements

The South African Youth Manifesto was a passion project for the Youth Lab team, brought to life by communities and supporters that made our dream come true. We first honour, appreciate and respect the youth who participated in the nine focus groups in their communities in the Vaal, Galeshewe, Langa, Mitchells Plein, Pietermaritzburg, Mankweng, Whittlesea, Mathibidi, Schweitzer-Reneke and Botshabelo. Inviting Youth Lab into your communities was an act of trust that we appreciate. Your energy, words and ideas fill this book with clarity and innovation. Continue to work together, always pursuing your political and developmental goals.

To the many Friends of Youth Lab who encourage and support our work, thank you for valuing us and this work. To the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung South Africa office, your partnership and financing of this project has made a difference to our efforts and demonstrated your commitment to practical forms of democracy. To the community organisers, service providers, volunteer facilitators and the writing team, you enhanced our efforts and multiplied our team. Thank you for making this journey easier.

To the Youth Lab team at large (the WhatsApp group), you are amazing. We have made this project work because of the ideas we continue to push, and your never-ending support of the work of Youth Lab.

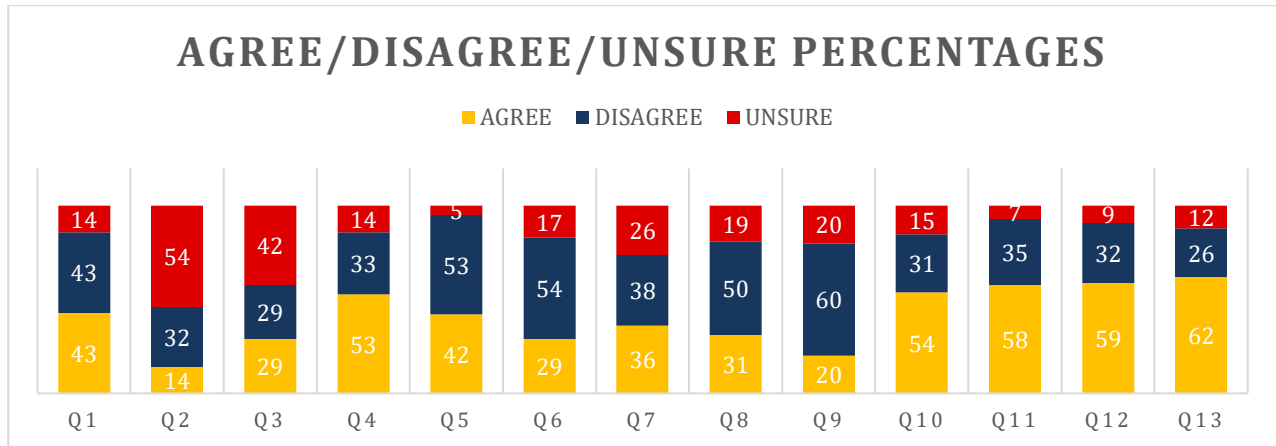
## Introduction

Every election cycle, we see a drive to get young people to participate and cast their votes in shaping the future of the country. Yet every election these efforts fall flat, with youth voting rates having decreased significantly in the past two cycles. This is often attributed to claims of the youth being apathetic and disinterested in political participation, though it is now evident that accepting this as true demonstrates a profoundly shallow understanding of the youth in South Africa.

Our country has a significant population of young people. Of the 55.6 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2016) in the country, those aged 15 – 34 comprise 20.1 million. In a policy brief on voter participation in the 2014 election, Collette Schulz-Herzenberg of the Institute for Security Studies, noted that there is a global trend of low young voter turnout. Surprisingly however, as of 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2018, there were 26.1 million eligible voters registered, with the total number of young people registered at 11.9 million - which tells a different story.

Young people are certainly not apathetic, but they are dissatisfied, and we sought to explore the reasons for this. Thus, this manifesto is the product of extensive consultations with youth from around the country in their respective communities. Multiple groups of young people were assembled from across provinces, from Pietermaritzburg and Galeshewe to the Vaal, Langa and Whittlesea, to ascertain their degree of political knowledge and involvement, identify and deliberate critically on the most important issues they face in each of their communities, and propose specific interventions which correspond to their desired outcomes or 'picture of success'.

The boxes below indicate crudely the level of political knowledge and involvement of the different youth consulted in each of the nine provinces. In the next few paragraphs we will discuss the issues as highlighted by the youth. We will identify and explore specific challenges and outline the proposed interventions and pictures of success as envisioned or described by the youth in South Africa. Young people were asked what they wanted, and the following is what they shared.



Q1: I have voted in an election
Q2: I know what proportional representation means
Q3: I know what direct representation means
Q4: I prefer voting for a party than a person
Q5: I am a member of a political party
Q6: I don't think it's important to be a member of a political party
Q7: I have read a manifesto
Q8: I only vote for parties after reading their manifestoes
Q9: Party manifestoes are useful after elections
Q10: SA political parties think youth voters are important
Q11: I would like to run for office
Q12: I would vote for a president below the age of 35
Q13: I would vote for a woman to be president

There are notable instances of youth being actively involved in key issues at both community and national levels. The most recent is the well-publicised #FeesMustFall movement, which saw a youth-led nationwide drive towards free higher education and the decolonisation of university campuses and curriculums. Rather than being engaged with on their propositions however, students were met with brutality and other consequences such as suspension, in an attempt to shut down the very determination those in power consistently accuse young people of not having. The powers that be

have refused to meet young people where they are and to engage them authentically on issues they feel strongly enough to risk being shot at with tear gas and harassed by private security companies.

Young people are not disinterested; they are harassed into silence.

### **Youth Dissatisfaction (with the status quo)**

The survey on South African voter participation in elections by The Socio-Economic Surveys Unit of the Knowledge System Group Human Sciences Research Council, reported the finding that only 33% of young people (18 – 24 age category) who participated in their survey were satisfied with local government. Moreover, youth were less positive about the performance of local government in comparison with the other age groups. The same group of young people specifically stated that they were 'strongly dissatisfied' with local government.

In conversations had towards compiling this manifesto, young people had views along these same lines. They indicated that the limited faith they have in government is further diminished by awareness of political campaign tactics involving parties paying to push their propaganda and injecting money to influence the media, as well as only making appreciable changes in areas where they have large support bases.

The young people of Mathibidi, Mpumalanga, were most vocal about their dissatisfaction with government service delivery. They emphasised frustration with the fact that parties only use their platforms for marketing and promoting themselves as opposed to making actual changes, are uninterested in offering communities sustainable solutions, and focus all their attention on the attainment of power as opposed to what happens after. In multiple provinces, it was agreed that the lack of trust is compounded by parties which care about communities only during elections and completely forget and disregard their issues thereafter.

Again, youth are not disinterested in politics. We are, however, hugely frustrated by the actions of our leaders.



### **Limited Political Engagement and Education**

This lack of faith is cemented in the absence of engagement with young people at the level of political education. Many of the youth consulted for this manifesto were not aware of how the electoral system works, including issues around proportional versus direct representation, as well as the contents and functions of party manifestos. The published declarations of intentions, views and essentially, the promises that a political party makes to the public are put together without much insight from the general youth population (those that are not specifically aligned to party politics).

Remarkably, only 36% of the youth engaged with had read a manifesto - many had neither seen nor read a party manifesto and very simply did not understand what its purpose is. Young people observed that many in their communities had not read a manifesto and voted solely based on loyalty - which does not serve the community positively. Here opinions were dynamic, with some noting the significance of being aware of what parties promise in order to better hold them to their word, while others pointed out that parties are not truthful anyway, making the use of their manifestos doubtful. While some youth had read election pamphlets believing they were complete manifestos, others noted that they knew what each party stood for historically - hence there is no need to keep reading what they promise.

Youth in Botshabelo, Free State were particularly concerned about young people not having access to information on party politics and ideologies, voicing concern about whether parties really care to speak to the youth.

Questions raised here included: Who can we trust? Will they deliver on what they promise? Will things even change? What do their promises hold for us? What does a manifesto matter when they never have actions behind them? Again, who can we trust?

Youth also remarked on how unfair it is that in order to obtain a full party manifesto, one needs to access it online and with data being so expensive, it is unsurprising that majority of the country has never read these documents. How, in the first place, can we be certain of the credibility of elections – and not simply whether they are free and fair - when a huge proportion of the population does not quite understand what their vote actually means? The difficulty of accessing such crucial information will be discussed at greater length later in this youth manifesto.

## **The Electoral System**

The differences between proportional and direct representation was a key topic of conversation during the consultations. In response to the question of whether or not they understood what the former means, 14% agreed while 54% were completely uncertain. When asked what direct representation means, 29% agreed that they do know and 42% were, once again, unsure of the meaning.

Once these terms were discussed at length, the discussion shifted to whether or not proportional representation works well in South Africa. The young people shared conflicting views, with some fully in support of our current party system (53% saying they prefer voting for a party than a person) as they feel reassured by the interest of the masses being represented, and the party being able to hold the elected president accountable as they work closely together. However, the case for direct representation was far more substantiated, with strong opinions on the individual being better as they can be held directly accountable without the ability to hide behind party politics; highlighting corruption within political parties and governmental institutions.

In these discussions, the issue of accountability stood out most prominently. After extensive deliberations were had about representation and the importance of manifestos, we delved more deeply into the 'what' it is that young people believe government does not take accountability for. The first - their position of power as parties.

## **Youth and Gender Representation in Politics**

Youth are increasingly becoming aware that they need to participate politically if they want their voices heard, and that they have to play an active role if they want to see change. Many young people involved in the consultations indicated an interest in running for office in order to make concrete changes. It is apparent that young people would like to be more involved in governance and decision-making processes and contribute to solving the range of unemployment and development problems plaguing the country – they want to act in correcting the mistakes that have been made.

In terms of who, exactly, young people would vote for, 59% said they would vote for a candidate under the age of 35 and 62% would vote for a woman; both groups which are severely

underrepresented in party politics. Although the youth offered conflicting reasons for these views, it is clear nonetheless they want to see more of themselves represented in positions of power.

In Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal the effects of patriarchy on politics were highlighted by the youth. Many spoke strongly about their objections to voting for a woman as president, while others spoke categorically against the sexist opinions of their peers. Young people in the Western and Northern Cape had similar debates, with many clinging to the sexist bias of women not being strong enough to lead. It is important to note here that in each of the provinces, men were overrepresented in the discussions.

As the debate shifts to the age of candidates one would vote for, youth opinions vary once again. Africa is the youngest continent in the world, with 60% of our population under the age of 25, yet the majority of African presidents are in their seventies (UN World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision). In South Africa, our youngest president was 65 at the time of his inauguration. The general public has, in essence, become accustomed to leaders that are much older, and this is apparent in youth opinions on voting for a younger leader.

Reasons put forward against voting for someone under 35 included: a perceived youthful lack of maturity, constant changing of minds and a lack of experience that could be detrimental to the country's stability. On this side of the scale, it was pointed out that young people may use state funds irresponsibly, focusing on dangerous vices rather than effecting change. It is interesting, if not ironic that many of the reasons offered against voting for younger leaders are actually characteristic of our current crop of older leaders. Others were of the opinion that people's ideas and policies should be worth more than their few years of experience, and that a youthful mentality to development is necessary - that young people are the perfect bridge between established ideologies and revolutionary action plans.

Recognising that our country is one with a youthful majority, lengthy discussions were had about the president being representative of that. In these conversations about age, young people across the country, but specifically so in the Vaal, note that parties do not care about them and the only way they will have their issues heard is if they become part of the solution. They believe they can make a greater impact, bringing innovation and a hunger for change which those above 35 are lacklustre

about. Youth rightly note that older candidates simply implement policies they may not even live long enough to see.

While there were conflicting opinions on age and gender, what remained clear is that young people are mindful of the lack of representation of women and youth in parliament. Youth, while wary that their huge numbers are the reason parties pander to them, recognise that change is necessary and their involvement is inevitable.

The specific challenges as well as proposed interventions highlighted by the youth will be explored in greater detail in the following chapters. In each chapter a priority will be highlighted. The challenges youth have outlined in various provinces will be analysed. The picture of success that youth envision will be put forward, followed by the intervention young people recommend in order to realise that success. Finally, the role that youth can play to implement these interventions will be presented.

## Priority 1

### Socio-Economic Challenges

In conversations around development in the country, supposed apathy on the part of young people is often cited extensively. What is rarely said however, is how often those conversations are had without youth presence or involvement. Yet, when young people are permitted to speak with certainty on matters that pertain specifically to them, it becomes clear how exactly they view the challenges that affect them and their communities, and the genuine drive they have towards taking an active role in providing meaningful resolutions.

Young people are often told to work hard, remain focused on school and aim for higher education, explore entrepreneurship and be revolutionary in escaping the poverty cycle, as if the very real socioeconomic challenges the majority of the country experiences do not affect them. Meanwhile, youth yearn to be change makers in the country, aware of the various barriers to sustainable development.

The interconnectedness of socioeconomic challenges in any country or context is undeniable, and young people of South Africa are both aware of and determined to draw attention to the ways in which the disproportionate levels of poverty in our communities leads to disparities in service delivery and safety, serve as barriers to employment, encourage substance abuse and crime, etcetera. In this chapter we will explore the different socioeconomic challenges youth have identified, including crime, poverty and substance abuse; their origins and impacts, as well as the proposed interventions and picture of success as outlined by youth in consultations.

“The burden of unemployment is concentrated amongst young people as they account for 63,5% of the total number of unemployed persons. The unemployment rate among young people is higher irrespective of education level. The graduate unemployment rate was 33,5% for those aged 15–24 and 10,2% among those aged 25–34 years, while the rate among adults (aged 35–64 years) was 4,7%. Just over 30% of young people have jobs and about half of them participate in the labour market. Within young people, those aged 15–24 years are more vulnerable in the labour market with an unemployment rate of over 52%, an absorption rate of about 12,2% and a labour force participation rate of 25,6%.” – Stats SA, 2018

### Poverty

High unemployment and low income are at the root of many socioeconomic development hurdles in South Africa and poverty, a systemic issue, is a direct barrier to employment opportunities. Children who live in vulnerable communities are denied equal education and lack the financial resources to access higher education, which further limits their employment opportunities – except for those who rely on physical labour or basic skills.

It is therefore unsurprising that poverty was consistently highlighted as a critical issue deserving of attention in each of the communities visited. Youth in the Eastern Cape, for instance, spoke on the issue of poverty as it relates to job access: the high rates of poverty are almost directly related to the low rates of employment in the community of Whittlesea; while those in Botshabelo, Free State and Galeshewe in the Northern Cape, spoke specifically on the effects of poverty as it relates to substance abuse and high crime rates.

Youth detailed the different ways in which poverty limits one's access to work opportunities, highlighting how poverty encourages corruption in the form of nepotism, and promotes favouritism over merit. Also flagged here were issues of expensive transportation to urban areas in order to apply for employment, the continued lack of accountability by decision makers, the futile promises of empowerment from government institutions, labour exploitation, lack of skills development outside of formal institutions of learning, and severe financial barriers to higher learning, in addition to a simple lack of job opportunities.

To be sure, youth were not only problem-oriented, but envision themselves clearly in the pictures of success across multiple challenges identified. The interventions proposed to address these challenges include: the establishment of more and better skills development programmes; creation of jobs in industries that are not given as much attention in their communities, such as recycling, commercial farming and community food gardens; and a significant increase in internship and job-shadowing opportunities for those living in poverty (who are often kept at arm's length), as contingency plans for bridging the gap between matriculation and entry into the job market.

Moreover, in an age where access to employment opportunities is becoming dependent on access to digital media, those without said access are increasingly left behind and forgotten. Hence, a deep need for understanding technology was brought forward as a focus area, towards the goal of holistic youth development. Youth suggested creating training programmes that focus on digital literacy, in

an attempt to allow marginalised youth gain access to information, job opportunities and alternative options for generating income.

It is clear that young people demand solutions that go beyond what is currently promised by civil servants. In attempting to be part of the solution, youth have identified a focus on alternative forms of community development. Developing resource-based economies is a solution favoured by youth across the different provinces, which, they believe, involves the building of business, education, services and employment through their own efforts rather than relying on government institutions. The focus on playing a role that is not contingent on multiple external factors speaks directly to the deep mistrust the youth have for government as well as their refusal to become the apathetic youth often described.

Youth also pointed out that in highly marginalised communities, poverty serves as a gateway for other social ills, specifically including crime, safety and substance abuse, which will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

### Crime

A tough economic climate often leads to violent crime, and the two cannot be separated in discussions on the socioeconomic challenges young people face in South African communities. As the youth point out, crime is usually worsened by unemployment, a lack of education opportunities and poverty, and regularly results in substance abuse and as a way of survival for many. In this conversation, young people are frank about the urgent need for economic growth as a way to reduce high crime rates. Many young people are less upset by the actual crimes committed than they are about the root causes, stressing that when root causes are ignored, addressing symptoms will always be futile.

The specific challenges highlighted here include: gangs that are easy to join and stay in; drugs being sold in schools; having parents who are substances users; a cost of living that is only affordable to those in more affluent neighbourhoods, as well as issues of safety and security.

In Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal young people discussed how existing government campaigns do not result in innovative solutions, but instead, copious amounts of money are spent on sending out

the same information. In Langa in the Western Cape, youth highlighted the direct correlation between unemployment and crime, further supporting the notion that youth around the country acknowledge inequality as one of the chief causes of the crime problem.

To most youth across provinces, it is clear that interventions must involve a thorough understanding of the crime problem in the country, as opposed to simply policing it. There is a deep dislike for the same campaigns being put in place by government, which do little to assist persons who are victims of circumstance. While more effective policing is flagged as a potential solution, many of the interventions proposed by the youth emphasised focusing on community building as a way of combatting crime, in addition to building youth centres, prioritising family values and participation in economic activities.

Young people view themselves as active stakeholders in these interventions. The suggested approach involves identifying those at risk, forming support groups and enriching each other via educational programmes.

While sexual and gender-based violence did not rank highly as a priority amongst the specific groups consulted, it can be explained by limitations owing to the male-dominated group dynamics. Where this issue did come up, it was raised in the context of youth having little trust in the efforts of police to keep communities safe.

### Substance Abuse

As mentioned earlier, the issue of substance abuse is another major challenge brought up by youth. While the issue did not rank in every community engaged, substance abuse was still a sore point for many. The intersecting nature of these socioeconomic challenges was once again emphasised, with young people noting that when communities do not function properly, many people turn to abusing substances, which in turn results in various forms of violence and crime.

Issues that arose include alcohol abuse, which leads to higher rates of gender-based violence and crimes such as petty theft, drunk youth wreaking havoc on the community, and people prioritising buying substances over food. Young people in the Northern and Eastern Cape were more focused on



the lack of adequate police intervention, speaking lengthily on how few police vehicles, stations and patrols are available to their communities.

Again, in discussing solutions, youth were focused on their own capacity to positively impact their communities. Although many see the importance of having more efficient policing on the streets, their main efforts to rehabilitate their communities largely involved the creation of education campaigns to prevent youth from engaging with substances; developing youth centres and more playgrounds to keep young people engaged in healthier hobbies; creating social responsibility programmes that include a neighbourhood watch; having rehabilitation centres that are accessible to those without financial access, as well as deliberating together as youth on how to assist their peers.

Many also stressed that the problem of substance abuse is not only a youth issue, since some parents also abuse substances; and that a concerted, united effort is necessary to contain these significant challenges. The box below shows the different priority areas as indicated by the youth, including the specific challenges and pictures of success.

PRIORITY	CHALLENGE	PICTURE OF SUCCESS
<b>Poverty</b>	<p>Systematic racism that disallows those in undeveloped and rural areas the access those in privileged areas are.</p> <p>High youth unemployment rate and lack of skills and experience.</p> <p>Lack of accountability from governmental service providers. Promises made but unkept.</p> <p>Financial barriers result in lack of access to education, employment, and often leads to substance abuse and crime.</p> <p>Exploitation of labour when employment opportunities are identified.</p>	<p>Complete eradication of poverty.</p> <p>Skills development programmes that are well-placed and financially accessible to those in need.</p> <p>Community gardens and commercial farming.</p> <p>Accountable governmental structures that ensure equitable access to basic services regardless of area or privilege.</p> <p>Resource-based economy that functions independently within communities.</p>
<b>Crime</b>	<p>Gang- and substance abuse related crimes.</p> <p>Inefficient and demotivated police staff.</p> <p>Inadequate police stations in communities.</p>	<p>Efficient police stations, staff available and process that benefit the community positively.</p>

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<b>Substance Abuse</b>	<p>Lack employment opportunities lead young people and many older community members to abuse substances.</p> <p>Substance abuse correlates directly with gender-based violence and sexual violence.</p> <p>Police intervention is minimal. Impacts the overall safety of communities.</p> <p>No rehabilitation centres in communities. Many are financially inaccessible.</p>	<p>Educational campaigns on substance abuse in order to prevent.</p> <p>Youth centres for skills development for those who turn to substances when unemployed.</p> <p>Social responsibility programmes including neighbourhood watch and working together with the police.</p> <p>Affordable and accessible rehab facilities for communities.</p>
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## Priority 2

### Education

In the world Economic Forum 2017/2018 Global Competitiveness Report, South Africa was rated 116<sup>th</sup> out of 138 countries for the quality of its education system, with our higher education and training system ranking 114<sup>th</sup>. It is clear there remains a long way to go, and this is an area of concern that has been made abundantly clear by young people.

One does not need to think too far back to remember the national #FeesMustFall movement, in which youth demanded access to free education and the decolonisation of institutions of higher learning - both structurally as well as via the curriculum. Understanding the socioeconomic reasons many are denied access to higher education, the young people engaged in consultation spoke critically of the financial obstacles to accessing higher education as well as the quality of education received.

Youth are encouraged to stay in school and study hard, so they can access higher education, get a good paying job and provide for themselves and their families. Meanwhile, there exist structural boundaries that determine who gets to access this bright future. The threat of unemployment remains a core worry, with many of the youth engaged clear on the fact that higher education is no guarantee of employability and economic opportunity.

While public schools continue to struggle in South Africa, independent schools excel - although they cater only to 5% of the total schooling population of the country. Students from poor and working-class families often do not enjoy access to schooling that increases their chances of quality education and admittance into universities. Hence, access to quality education in the country is largely determined by wealth and privilege. The challenges noted by young people in mostly underdeveloped areas include: lack of dedicated staff, unfair language practices, few or worn amenities and insufficient support.

#### Fees

In December 2017, then-President Jacob Zuma announced that free higher education for poor and working-class students will be introduced for first year students, to be phased over the next five

years. “This policy intervention will enable the government to extend fully subsidised free higher education to youth from well over 90% of South African households. All poor and working-class South African students enrolled at public TVET colleges will be funded through grants, not loans,” the President said. The promises made have never been kept.

Education is still more expensive than ever, with fees steadily rising. Youth in the Eastern Cape highlighted the importance of factoring in socio-economic conditions in the discussion about free education, noting that the majority of South Africans do not earn nearly enough to be able to afford the financial demands of higher education.

The result is that majority of the country is unable to access higher education and, when they can, it comes with huge amounts of debt. Those without parents to support them, those reliant on elderly guardians, and those who come from families that simply do not have the funds to further (or even simply finish) their schooling, are often left behind. Young people believe that for equal access to education to be made available, basic education should be made completely free. Some propose that university application fees should be refunded when applications are unsuccessful, while others suggested that they be eliminated altogether.

Other suggestions put forward was collaboration between the private sector and government in creating merit-based bursaries, to encourage students to work harder as well as limit the financial burden on those from less privileged backgrounds. Many young people in the Eastern Cape recommended the provision of financial assistance to those in need and using FET colleges to gain the skills that will aid their communities.

### Quality of Education

In South Africa, the amount of money spent at a learning institution is often directly linked to the standard of education one receives. In a country where, historically, access to quality service delivery was determined by race, not much has changed to equalise conditions in disadvantaged communities. People who live in underdeveloped areas are not only forced to live in dire poverty, struggling daily to access basic services, but the low quality of education they receive makes it more difficult to empower themselves and adequately support a family.

Like access to services such as electricity, formal housing, water and sanitation, access to quality education is also reserved for people in urban areas. Schools in rural areas are left to disintegrate, rarely ever receiving the attention needed in the form of adequate numbers of trained staff, well-kept and sufficient facilities and resources that make the education experience one that allows young people to engage actively in their own development.

Young people in the Free State and Mpumalanga most notably, drew attention to these deep inequalities and the grave discrepancies in public versus private school education, and in universities as compared to colleges. Inevitably, they point out, students with financial access receive a higher standard of education, with different curriculums, better teachers and facilities.

In KwaZulu Natal, the youth mostly emphasised the deficiencies in early childhood development, highlighting that the many educational challenges they now face could have been prevented in the earliest stages of learning. Here, it is noted that an inadequate education from the early stages often limits a student's ability to think and learn creatively. In essence, young people with the least access to quality education are not given the opportunity to develop to the best of their abilities.

Young people are eager to focus on learning critical thinking and practical skills, as part of vocational training. Too many youth have found, upon entry into the work force, that they are without the necessary skills to cope with the demands of the job market. There was unanimous agreement across provinces on the importance of development in other industries, including in the creative, beauty, fashion, as well as design and entertainment industries, as a way to introduce young people to alternative careers that could result in establishing businesses which uplift, upskill and empower their communities.

In line with the demands of the #FeesMustFall movement, young people across the board believe that decolonisation of the country's education system will mark a major step towards sustainable development of the country. Mostly against standardised forms of learning, the youth are keen to work on solutions-thinking and problem-solving that is specific to the African context and places greater emphasis on improving numeracy and literacy.

In Limpopo, the youth believe that the process of education must necessarily include financial literacy. They believe financial institutions can assist in this regard, through the provision of seminars

and free courses which mobilise young people around the country, in committing to a campaign resulting in sustainable economic participation.

### TVET & FET Institutions

Across provinces, young people discussed the apparent neglect of Technical and Vocational Education and Training as valid forms of higher education. While recognising the value in universities, there was a preference among youth for FET and TVET institutions which, in their experience, are more immediate routes to finding employment and aiding in community development. In Mpumalanga specifically, several young people pointed out that many get degrees and still end up coming home to unemployment.

Youth are in clear agreement that more development and investment should be made in increasing availability and improving the quality of TVET and FET institutions, particularly in terms of physical infrastructure, human resources and other facilities. Young people from the Eastern Cape propose that more FET colleges be located closer to where they actually live. Where opportunities for study and self-actualisation are freely accessible, youth believe, there will be less crime, substance abuse and other interrelated consequences.

### Infrastructure

Additionally, youth are discouraged by the quality of facilities available in the public education system. In the Eastern Cape, many young people highlighted how extremely broken down many of the school facilities are, where they exist at all, and how distance and fees often prevent access by many in rural or remote areas.

Young people hunger for the ability to learn in an environment that supports learning. They insist that all places of education should have comprehensive facilities and be inclusive of those with disabilities. They require adequate health, sports, and community resources such as laboratories and libraries. Youth know what they want and what is needed to reach a level of training that makes them effective participants in the development and betterment of the country. Our education

system needs a systematic overhaul, one which places young people on a level field and guarantees that finance is never a barrier to skills development and education.

In short, young people of South Africa have expressed a desire to create an education system that does not leave the majority of the country behind - one that values evolution and new ways of thinking. And while equity is what they want to see, a distinct need for equality within the education system is the first step. Essentially, youth put forward, the system of education must be configured in a way that values and promotes independent, critical thinking, and eliminates the existing disparity between public and private institutions of learning. No one should ever be left behind because they were born into an environment with systems skewed to only benefit the privileged.

It is time for government to prioritise the ideas of young people, especially those without the privilege to access spaces where they can be heard and factored into decision-making. They understand that a great deal of investment is necessary to tackle the country’s developmental issues. They demand to be taken seriously, and for their solutions to be heard – all they require is commitment and support from the relevant segments of society.

PRIORITY	CHALLENGE	PICTURE OF SUCCESS
<b>Fees</b>	<p>Basic as well as higher education are almost impossible to access. Application fees are not refunded upon negative feedback.</p> <p>Huge need for decolonising institutions by way of languages of instruction, coursework as well as</p>	<p>Free education for all. Collaboration between private sector and government to provide merit-based funding for higher institutions of learning.</p> <p>Financial assistance that is inclusion of other forms of training, not simply university.</p>
<b>Quality of Education</b>	<p>Land ownership being inaccessible, especially in urban areas.</p> <p>Education system still leaves young people ill-equipped for work force.</p> <p>Focus on formal education that does not allow for other forms of training.</p>	<p>Comprehensive overhaul of curriculums at schools in rural areas.</p> <p>Equally matching levels of quality in private and public institutions.</p> <p>Includes critical thinking that allows training outside of traditional academia. Financial literacy for all.</p>

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<p><b>TVET &amp; FET Institutions</b></p>	<p>Lack of facilities close enough to communities. Staff is undertrained.</p> <p>Once qualification is done, employment opportunities are difficult to access.</p>	<p>Adequately trained and engaging staff. Sufficiently maintained facilities, catering to all training that is done at the institution.</p> <p>A focus on social entrepreneurship.</p>
<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>Majority of universities are far from communities, needing expensive travel to access.</p> <p>Dilapidated, unmaintained and used for incorrect purposes.</p>	<p>Well-placed institutions close to or within communities.</p> <p>Community spaces for learning, libraries, centres and laboratories. Specialised schools for training in beauty, entertainment, sports, etc. industries.</p> <p>Infrastructure that caters to all those with disabilities.</p>



## Priority 3

### Infrastructure & Service Delivery

In a country with such blatant inequality, it should come as no surprise that during discussions with youth, their main source of frustration was the standard of infrastructure and significant lack of service delivery in their various communities.

Young people take an active interest in the infrastructure present in the communities they live in and are surrounded by, as well as the associated service delivery or lack thereof. In many rural communities, infrastructure and service delivery are absent to the extent that many youth do not realise the services they do not enjoy, by virtue of where they live, are innate human rights. Some communities are so accustomed to living without basic services that they are not signalled as a problem.

The issues highlighted here include: water, sanitation, roads, land, physical as well as technological infrastructure and service delivery. South African youth recognise that the constitution offers them little power in redressing the arrested development of communities suffering the aftereffects of apartheid. While their rural communities receive little to no service delivery, infrastructure development and upkeep, wealthier communities rarely have to worry about this, or having to go on strike to draw attention to the low standard of living they experience.

As such, youth understand that discrimination is institutionalised and the most necessary action to be taken is to hold those in power accountable.

#### Physical Infrastructure

Rural development is one of the most neglected areas in South Africa, with the needs of the poor continuously side-lined even as they are blamed for their circumstances. Development in rural communities is almost non-existent, with existing infrastructure mismanaged and often left unkempt. Here, young people stressed that even when some efforts are made towards development in communities, citizens are never consulted and often, for the same reason, the developments do not serve communities as well as they could.

It is well known that town planning in South Africa has deeply racist origins. This is easily provable by observing and comparing the differences in infrastructure in areas with a majority of black people and those where white people are a majority. Infrastructure is so neglected in rural communities that many have no choice but to travel long distances in order to access basic services. Whether for education, employment or other social reasons, the most financially vulnerable are often forced to spend the limited resources they have in accessing services that people in more affluent areas never have to think twice about.

The issues highlighted here include: how community centres are used for municipal activities, while the community itself is not given access, and how there are few to no places of safety, such as police stations, and areas which have them only have limited services available. The focus mainly was on the services they needed and were denied, based simply on the fact that they live in rural and side-lined communities.

Youth suggested introducing satellite offices for critical services in each community, as a way to cater to unique needs. Young people believe deeply in the spirit and practicality of community, with most of the interventions proposed relying heavily on their collective power: volunteering their own time to help restore the infrastructure, donating money for building materials, starting their own businesses, and being involved in every stage of the betterment of their communities. While touching on the importance of striking communally in efforts to garner attention from government, they also discussed the need to keep the infrastructure safe during these demonstrations.

The external intervention proposed here was the building of shopping malls and quality roads that are well-maintained to ensure safety, with emphasis on being economical by renovating roads rather than demolishing and rebuilding. In these debates, young people deliberated extensively on ways of improving their communities at large, consistently placing themselves within the solutions and interventions towards their pictures of success.

### Land and Housing

While there wasn't an extensive debate on the question of land, it is important to note that this can be attributed to the fact that many of the young people engaged with were from rural communities, from families which own their own land. Many young people in rural communities did not prioritise

land, as they often have access to the land allocated to families by traditional authorities. Also, many young people in rural communities are given agricultural land when they come of age. In those terms, rather than focusing on the issue of rights, the conversation stressed the need for land for development purposes, e.g., farming and building.

Where space is lacking, there are solutions. In urban spaces, the focus in relation to land was on ownership, and on the limited spaces available as well as costs. The issues flagged here include corruption, as in cases where government authorities prioritise their own needs above that of the community. Young people not only want to own the land their homes are on, but also to be able to use the land for other activities. They stressed the importance of land and housing being well-located, as simple access to the land itself is not the only solution.

Young people want access to land for the overall benefit of their communities; to engage in activities like farming and other commercial and entrepreneurial enterprises, as a way to become more active participants in the economy. In rural areas, they emphasise the communal ownership of mines as a potential source of community empowerment and development.

### Water and Sanitation

Many rural communities in South Africa rely heavily on Water Days – the only day of the week or after an extended period when water is freely available for the community by means of a delivery truck. And yet, in a number of affected provinces, the issue of water and sanitation hardly came up. What does it say about the state of the nation, that many of our citizens are so accustomed to living without access to water, a basic human right, that it is not even signalled as a problem anymore?

Youth in Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape had access to water, while those in communities in the North West, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Free State mostly did not. Numerous communities live their days without access to water and sufficient sanitation, with five out of the nine communities visited in consultations having wholly inadequate toilet facilities. Youth are frustrated with the fact that even with protests occur in communities, they often do not get the support needed, until property destruction becomes the topic of conversation.

Specific problems highlighted relating to water and sanitation included a lack of maintenance of water pumps, with each location having a borehole but many being broken, which results in masses going without water completely. Also, when water is available, it is often polluted and unsafe to use.

Once again, young people place themselves squarely in their pictures of success, with interventions extending beyond the immediacy of their problems. They are largely in support of holistic solutions that benefit their communities in the long-term, as opposed to simply opting for more taps. Proposed interventions included: creating community-based sanitation systems; encouraging young people to be the agents of change in their own communities for campaigns on water-saving; influencing representation in forestry, owning nurseries and promoting water-wise plants.

South Africa's real water crisis is happening now. The youth recommend that the focus not solely be kept on affluent areas like Cape Town, but also on the hundreds of marginalised communities left completely without options.

### Health Facilities

As is the case with other basic services, impoverished communities consistently lack sufficient healthcare facilities. Interestingly however, the physical structure of health facilities was less of an issue for young people than the service and assistance they receive.

Key physical concerns include: the distance of clinics from communities and how few are available; the cleanliness of clinics; and inadequate equipment as well as a general lack of maintenance. The most critical issue noted here was that health facilities are few and far between, which leads to greater problems during emergency situations.

Additionally, the cost of accessing emergency services is a huge issue for many young people. Often, in emergency situations, there are no ambulances close enough to transport victims. When ambulances are somewhat available, they are not available on weekends, and within that availability, they are still unreliable, arriving late with poor service delivery and a shortage of staff.

Other challenges relating to health facilities cited by youth include unprofessional treatment, with emphasis on the problematic treatment of pregnant teens, and a perpetual shortage of labour which

also affects the attitudes as well as ability of professionals to do their jobs. Moreover, although clinics are open until 7pm on weekends, they only attend to emergencies, and with many communities only having one clinic, emergency situations are not properly addressed. The problem is also community-focused, with young people noting that many are not educated on how to take care of themselves.

In this regard, young people stressed the importance of hiring and training health workers with the right qualifications and to be less critical of patients and ensuring that health care facilities are always adequate and safe. Considering the issue of unemployment along with the shortage of health care services and professionals, youth suggest a focus on upskilling people in communities, to bridge gaps in service delivery and during emergencies, as well as offering career guidance to youth as a way to streamline them into the healthcare industry.

### **Tech Infrastructure**

Young people's concerns about technological infrastructure are not purely social - many young people understand the importance of digital application systems for the enhancement of education as well as economic opportunities. They also recognise that the expense of data and inability to access computers or smart phones often causes the most vulnerable and in need of employment to become more frustrated and desperate.

Access to information is, today, a constitutional right although, like many other rights, it is denied to millions daily as a result of the current ways in which information is created and shared. In this digital age, the majority of South Africans who do not have access to smart phones and cannot afford data costs are sorely disadvantaged.

The technological component of higher learning is also a concern to young people, with the democratisation of education one of the main interventions proposed here. The youth suggest, for example, making more skills development programmes available online, as a form of informal training. Although the issue of data costs remains relevant, young people believe in their capacity to take control of their futures and acknowledge the need for enhancing their skills and acquiring the educational benefits of the internet and other technology.

Affordability stands as the greatest barrier to realising equitable distribution in technological infrastructure. Young people understand that if prices are lowered, more people will be able to access information, education and employment opportunities, allowing for more active participation in the economy and future development of the country.

Young people see themselves in this solution, knowing that they can offer fresh ideas towards realising their picture of success. They require engagement in the information technology and digital markets as a way to unlock local economies, as well as the development of suitable and affordable technological facilities in communities where there are none.

Again, we witness the interconnectedness of the various socio-economic issues discussed. Underdeveloped and rural communities are always forced to deal with issues aggravated by their extreme poverty. For instance, in communities without water, inadequate roads are flagged as a main problem - which in turn worsens problems of service delivery. And without access to basic services, especially water and sanitation, health issues are often intensified.

PRIORITY	CHALLENGE	PICTURE OF SUCCESS
<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor infrastructure in rural communities, including police stations, shopping malls, hospitals.</li> <li>- Current infrastructure unmaintained and misused.</li> <li>- Travelling long distances from rural areas to access infrastructure.</li> <li>- Tertiary institutions inaccessible for those in underdeveloped areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible, maintained infrastructure with necessary facilities.</li> <li>- Community collaboration for new spaces as well as improving current ones.</li> <li>- Renovating and upgrading to quality tar roads with appropriate signage rather than demolishing.</li> <li>- Youth volunteers for upkeep of facilities.</li> <li>- Skilled youth should offer civil services.</li> </ul>
<b>Land &amp; housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land ownership being inaccessible, especially in urban areas.</li> <li>- Corruption in community service delivery where government prioritises themselves over sufficient housing for communities.</li> <li>- Space is lacking for community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land and housing that is well-placed.</li> <li>- Basic and commercial farming on community-owned land.</li> <li>- Getting rid of the financial worth of the housing so corruption is lessened.</li> <li>- Solar power for housing.</li> <li>- Ownership of mines.</li> </ul>

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<b>Healthcare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of enough healthcare facilities,</li> <li>- Shortage of trained and professional labour force.</li> <li>- Lack of services and health facilities.</li> <li>- Insufficient equipment.</li> <li>- Corruption prioritised over giving community access to adequate healthcare.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequately trained and empathetic health workers.</li> <li>- Community mobile clinics.</li> <li>- More health inspections.</li> <li>- Greater accountability for allocated funds.</li> <li>- Better career guidance in the health sector and better implementation of skills development and empowerment programmes and lead to community healthcare.</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More often unavailable than not.</li> <li>- Lack of sufficient staff leading to services arriving late with poor service delivery.</li> <li>- Expensive to access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easily-accessible and sufficient emergency services.</li> <li>- Enough vehicles for hospitals and police stations.</li> <li>- Increased number of skilled employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Water and sanitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inadequate access to daily water supply – sometimes left to ‘water days’.</li> <li>- Water that is available is polluted.</li> <li>- Lack of formal sanitation systems in multiple communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to clean water and working sanitation in each household.</li> <li>- Awareness about the importance of preserving water resources.</li> <li>- Reduce deforestation and put plans in place to preserve water sources.</li> <li>- Households to all have water-retentive plants.</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People don’t have facilities and data is expensive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equal and affordable access to information via sufficient tech infrastructure.</li> <li>- Building technological facilities to provide training and participate in the IT market.</li> </ul>

## Priority 4

### Economy, Youth & Skills Development

In his recent remarks at the “Invest in South Africa Private Roundtable” in New York, President Cyril Ramaphosa spoke clearly on policy plans towards integrating more of the previously disadvantaged into the economic mainstream. “We have implemented policies to promote black economic empowerment, to provide black people, women and people with disability with the assets and opportunities they need to participate more meaningfully in economic activity”, he declared.

The President’s plan includes a focus on growing economic forums, job creation, establishing an Infrastructure Fund, attending to the multiple issues within education and health, as well as investing in improving the municipal social infrastructure. One can only hope these promises are kept.

Interestingly enough, many of the issues touched on by the President were highlighted by the youth in consultations, whose interventions and solutions were largely on par with the recently proposed government policies. Young people are certain about what they believe will not only aid them in becoming active participants in the country’s economy, but also improving the future of the country. The main point made here involved more integration into the formal economy through job creation, as well as enhancing prospects for entrepreneurship and exploring the potential of a resource-based economy.

The effects of socio-economic conditions that bar many from participating in the economy was discussed at length in each of the different provinces, with many youth speaking about seeking ways of becoming self-sustainable in the face of an uncaring government. The discussions zeroed in on how poverty in rural and underdeveloped areas keep many from accessing education and employment, keeping them from becoming active participants and contributors to the economy.

#### Skills Development

The main proposition put forward by youth involves bridging the gaps between education and the economy, in a way that ensures access to all who desire. The focus here was on education and



training that is outside the formal institutions many are unable to access. Developing programmes that assist young people to gain information and knowledge that they otherwise would not have was stressed as a way to limit the effects of inequality.

Young people in the Eastern Cape spoke on employment problems being rooted in a lack of quality education and training, in addition to the fact that many programmes designed to upskill people outside of formal education often fall short. There are no FET colleges in their communities and as such, many are unable to find suitable ways to develop their skills so as to obtain gainful employment. The same was said in Mpumalanga, where attention was placed on prioritising alternative forms of training that allow young people to gain useful employment.

In South Africa, youth development and skills training programmes grow daily through government and private sector initiatives, yet young people feel many are inadequate in meeting their specific needs. In the Northern Cape discussions, specifically highlighted was how facilities designed to serve communities - for developmental and cultural initiatives - are ruined and left to fall apart by a lack of maintenance. Some centres stand unused, with no specific programming available, while others end up being utilised for purposes that do not benefit the community. Youth particularly highlighted the need for such spaces to be created, maintained and developed with time, as community needs change.

In addressing the need for the development of multiple skillsets, it was also pointed out that entrepreneurship should not always be the major focus. While young people want to become self-sufficient and change their communities positively, there is great dissatisfaction with programmes that simply want to groom entrepreneurs at the expense of other skills and abilities such as social entrepreneurship. The idea of skill-sharing to teach and learn other trades as needed in individual communities was also brought forward and fervently supported by youth.

The discussions on interventions and solutions relating to the matter of skills development were dynamic across the provinces. Youth in Gauteng specifically spoke on having a more inclusive education system and equalising the way information is distributed, in addition to the creation of workplaces with practical skills development programmes. Within this, enhanced and flexible language policies are necessary to give all those who engage the best chance to excel.

Young people in Limpopo wanted to focus on youth-led incubation programmes that make relevant resources available, making access to information easier, and ensuring that youth participation and development is kept priority. In the Free State, emphasis was laid on the importance of job-readiness and avoiding prioritising university education over sustainable skills that allow young people the opportunity to thrive in their work environments.

Interventions leaning more heavily on government assistance included the adequate supply of learning materials (which are made available in all official languages), incentivising companies to offer training and training centres, and youth participation in the ideation and creation of future programmes. Of government, once again, the major request is accountability – with the understanding plans made to improve the sphere of skills development in the country can be realised through comprehensive investment, participation and accountability on the part of government.

### **Economic Participation**

The role socioeconomic obstacles play in limiting access by the majority of South African youth to viable economic opportunities clearly cannot be overstated. In underserved and marginalised communities, the most significant economic barriers as defined by the youth relate to issues around access to finance, distance as well as availability and affordability of education.

Young people highlighted how difficult it is for many in rural communities, who often have to travel long distances in order to access skills training and employment opportunities. In Gauteng, unsurprisingly, the youth discussed economic disempowerment as a direct function of racial inequality. Most youth involved in consultations agree that in both rural and other communities, opportunities for economic progression are severely diminished by structural challenges.

Proposed interventions offered by the youth to boost their economic prospects include: making more information available and affordable to the youth, and increasing opportunities for skills development and financial education. Young people in Langa suggested that government should fund internship programmes that lead to employment and offer the skills and abilities necessary for economic self-sustainability. Youth crave creativity and innovation, which they believe are necessary as existing models have proven to be less than effective in meeting their needs.

In Langa, in the Western Cape, much of the focus was on developing resource-based economies, with the idea of establishing autonomous communities not dependant on external assistance widely floated. Youth would also like to see business education provided to young community leaders, to aid their resource-based economy in working as well as possible, avoiding corruption and ensuring they are not exploited. In this way, communities can be developed to the point of profitability, and less focus will be placed on employability as a way to become active participants in the economy. Young people stress the importance of trade, business management and investing in community resources.

In the discussion on economic participation, access to information was a key concern. Here, youth also emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for digital literacy. They see the digital world as presenting a unique opportunity for skills development that will improve economic prospects for many.

PRIORITY	CHALLENGE	PICTURE OF SUCCESS
<b>Skills development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High rate of unemployed and underpaid graduates with few other skills.</li> <li>- Huge need to cater to those who are unable to access university and other forms of formal education and training.</li> <li>- Community centres are not used in ways that are for the betterment of young people.</li> <li>- Lack of digital knowledge and education.</li> <li>- Travelling long distances to access programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased number of accessible and functional internships to bridge</li> <li>- Focus on industries such as beauty, environmentalism, entertainment, digital media,</li> <li>- Develop communities by encouraging and training social entrepreneurs.</li> <li>- Digital training and innovation.</li> <li>- New or renovated infrastructure for various programmes within communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High rates of unemployment.</li> <li>- Financial access preventing youth people from being active participants in economic growth.</li> <li>- Exploitation within the workforce.</li> <li>- Corruption and nepotism keeping others from accessing opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprehensive overhaul of curriculums at schools in rural areas.</li> <li>- Alternative economies that do not rely as heavily on financial access.</li> <li>- Mobilising youth to lead them to participate functionally in the country's economy.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

There you have it.

These are the thoughts, opinions and values young people in South Africa propose are necessary to create the country they want to live and thrive in. Young people in our country are bold. They are determined. They are clear and concise. They not only know what they want but also the exact ways they envision themselves in the solutions, in their aim to realise the picture of success they imagine.

They are neither apathetic nor disinterested in political participation.

In this manifesto, we have discussed the ways in which young people have been discouraged from participating in a political climate that does not value their needs or opinions. We explored at length the importance of political engagement and education as ways to affirm the credibility of an electoral systems. We underscored the importance of political participation as well as reasons why the youth are discontent with the ways party politics are enacted. We explored the deep mistrust in government prevalent in many communities, as well as why exactly it is necessary to take into account the voices of young people in a democracy.

In the consultations held with youth for the purposes of this youth manifesto, extensive discussions were had on specific issues the young people wanted to highlight; why exactly they felt they were priorities; how they engaged with the challenges in each situation, and the specific interventions and pictures of success they envisage.

We have seen how socioeconomic challenges affect the lives of young people, and how poverty acts as a barrier to employment and empowerment and as a gateway to other social ills. The interconnectedness of poverty, crime, substance abuse and safety were highlighted, demonstrating the endless cycle of impoverishment many feel trapped in. We went on to explore how the youth experience the public education system, with the main challenges and solutions offered including: the high cost of education and the prospect of free education, the lack of quality that is present in basic and higher education, developing and maintaining TVET and FET institutions, as well as the need for re-examining the way education infrastructure is developed and distributed.

Still on the issue of infrastructure, inadequate land, housing, water, sanitation and technological infrastructure in rural and marginalised areas were raised with high regularity. Also touched on was the direct relationship between economic participation and socio-economic challenges. Opportunities to participate are significantly reduced by debilitating conditions present from the outset in poor and rural communities.

From this, it is clear that youth engagement in political participation can function at three levels, with varying degrees of effectiveness:

- Are young people simply beneficiaries? Are manifestos written with them in mind to simply benefit from?
- Are they partners? Are political parties and government willing to work together with them in forming a future we can live in equitably?
- Or are they the leaders? Are we listening and taking note of the leadership that is already present in the country? Are we aware of the actual power of young people who are committed to leading our country to a better future? Are we willing to work to ensure that their determination is rewarded?

From discussions with young people to determine the most critical challenges they face as well as potential interventions, it is apparent that many young people are already leaders taking active control of addressing personal and communal challenges. What remains is for those in power to listen and engage honestly.

Towards being accountable in our engagements with the young people that permitted us to consult with them, we do not want this to end here. We hope this is only the beginning, as, although we are sure there is immense value in what was shared here, some of which were discussed within each priority, there are other noteworthy issues that deserve attention. Some include: health, gender, race, disability and corruption. While these issues may have somewhat come up in each priority identified, the need for engaging further on each remains great.

Regarding issues of health and healthcare, especially in relation to sexual and reproductive health, hereditary concerns, environmental health issues and, as always, the infrastructure that comes with each are important. Exploring the effects of patriarchy on politics and greater society is also crucial.

Additionally, while the issue of racial inequality came up in Gauteng, and the effects discussed in multiple provinces, the explicit nature of racial discrimination and resultant oppressions deserves further exploration with young people.

We hope this manifesto serves as a catalyst for more in-depth consultations that result in more meaningful engagement of youth, as both partners, beneficiaries and leaders in political and economic development. Young people have spoken, clearly and with purpose; it's time you listened.

## The South African Youth Manifesto

Randi	Abrahams	Puseletso	Khoza	Matron	Mashile
Itumeleng	Alexander	Sphiwe	Khumalo	Kgapeletso	Mashille
Thami	Aphane	Nonstikelelo	Kula	Nwabisa	Masiko
Khanyisa	Baloyi	Tebogo	Kunene	Anita	Matayo
Rafick	Bedi	Kimberley	Kunene	Paledi	Mathipe
Carla	Bernado	Teboho	Kwetempane	Mmakhutso	Mawela
Phumeza	Blekiwe	Busang	Legia	Asemahle	Maxengana
Semakaleng	Booyesen	Khomotso	Lekaba	Amos	Mbekwa
Maisha	Bopape	Frans	Lekaowa	Naledi	Mboro
Sonja	Bosman	Winona	Lendis	Ntombikayise	Mbuyisa
Xolani	Buthelezi	Donald	Letsoalo	Sibusiso	Mdluli
Sipho	Buthelezi	Dion	Litabe	September	Mefswamere
Mbongeni	Cele	Nozi	Lolwane	Sivuyile	Mgeambe
Chwayita	Cengcani	Thulani	Lukhele	Phutumani	Mhluthwa
Lebo	Chiloane	Nomathemba	Lungilwana	Matee	Mkali
Constancia	Chiloane	Katlego	Maake	Martha	Mkasi
Unathi	Coko	Josias	Maake	Lungisani	Mkhize
Khanyisa	Damoyi	Lwandile	Mabece	Paicilla	Mkhondo
Wade	Davids	Katlego	Mabedla	Success	Mkhonza
Surprise	Dilebo	Sharine	Mabilu	Abednigo	Mkhonza
Aluthando	Dinwa	Musa	Mabovu	Mandla	Mngomezulu
Lesego	Dipitse	Kevin	Mabuza	Nosipho	Mansele
Mcdonald	Diradingwe	Vinolia	Machate	Seithati	Moabi
Itumeleng	Diraditsile	Nomonde	Madoho	Vuyelwa	Modikwane
Nomcebo	Dlamini	Theron	Maebela	Thabo	Modisagae
Stephan	Dube	Conride	Maebela	Lesedi	Mohlala
Xoliswa	Dume	Kagiso	Maebela	Gertrude	Mojapelo
Luzuko	Fena	Zandile	Makalima	Fazel	Mokgari
Masonwabe	Funani	Ndiyakholwa	Maketa	Lebohang	Mokhehle
Daniel	Gaobhubelwe	Anga	Makheta	Retshidisitswe	Mokupi
Ntandokazi	Gumede	Agreement	Makofane	Sibongile	Molapo
Thokozani	Gumede	Sanele	Malunga	Brian	Molepo
Ayanda	Haarmans	Makegeng	Mamabolo	Dimakatso	Molobela
Fezokuhle	Hlatshwayo	Johannes	Mangena	Mosiuoa	Monaheng
Kealeboja	Jafta	Zethi	Manxusa	Tebogo	Morajane
Tlhabeli	James	Paul	Maqela	Themba	Motaung
Cameron	Julius	Kedibone	Marobela	Caroline	Motete
Desmond	Kagame	Blessing	Martibela	Mahlomola	Mothibi
Lebogang	Kembo	Diboneng	Mashego	Otsile	Mothusi
Sandra	Kharabjaye	Dineo	Mashego	Thabiso	Motlakase

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Sipho	Motloung	Duncan	Norton	Selinah	Senwedi
Thabang	Motloung	Anelsa	Ntiza	Thapelo	Serapa
Goitumetswe	Motolong	Vimlem	Ntuli	Asanda	Shezi
Peeoho	Motsemme	Palesa	Nyamushwa	Lerato	Shopane
Tshepiso	Motsoatsoa	Carol	Nyathi	Sinethemba	Simayile
Philiswa	Moyakhe	Thabo	Nywule	Nolibabalo	Sizani
Boitumelo	Mpapa	Katleho	Pali	Tarah	Smythe
Ben	Mphele	Sandile	Phike	Benjamin	Sohlezi
Xolisa	Mpiko	Johannes	Phoshoko	Mihlali	Somtunzi
Mandisa	Msaula	Coral	Pillay	Siphamandla	Soxuzo
Sphesihle	Mthetwa	Rati	Pilusha	Nozuko	Tebele
Philani	Mtolo	Asiphile	Poni	Zandilsile	Thozela
Zuki	Mzila	Kgabele	Pule	Sabelo	Thusi
Siyanda	Namanzi	Siyabonga	Qwanya	Vuyokzi	Tomi
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Namhla	Ndeleni	Siyabonga	Radebe	Nosipho	Twani
Sandile	Ndeleni	Papi	Radebe	Nontembeko	Veliti
Liberty	Ndhlovu	Pule	Ramabodu	Tshwaro	Wildebrees
Lesedi	Nelson	Rahab	Ramolo	Nomsa	Xawuka
Andiswa	Ngkokolo	Pinky	Ruele	Sihle	Zaca
Zandile	Nguta	Boitshoko	Ruele	Johnny	Zola
Keitumetse	Nhlapo	Thabang	Seakgwa	Sphelele	Zuma
Aphelele	Njokweni	Innocentia	Seerane	Tiisetso	Zwane
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