



**Western Cape Youth Dialogue: The National Draft Youth Policy 2014 – 2019
Proposals and key recommendations for submission to the Youth Desk at the
Presidency**

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Acknowledgments

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation would like to acknowledge all the participants that represented their organisations and at times represented themselves as affected youth that made contributions to this document through their input during the dialogue. The list of participants and their organisations is provided below.

The IJR would also like to thank Mhlanganisi Madlongolwana from the organisation Activate for his contribution in helping the facilitation team design and frame the dialogue in a way that has made it an enriching and meaning dialogue platform for the participants.

Introduction

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation through its Inclusive Economies project and the Ashley Kriel Youth Leadership Development project convened a dialogue with Western Cape Youth to engage with the content of the draft policy document. The draft has been released by the Youth desk in the Presidency for comments. The document outlines key policy priorities and proposes a set of interventions for a comprehensive approach to youth development in South Africa.

The IJR has been extensively working in the area of youth leadership development through its Ashley Kriel youth leadership programme, facilitating dialogue spaces for youth to engage with critical issues that impact on their lives. On the other hand the Inclusive Economies complements the work of the AKYLP through research and analysis on macro trends that impact on youth development.

Consultation process

An open invitation was sent to key networks of the IJR that are known to already be working in the area of youth development. In addition, it was sent widely to youth specifically through the IJR's social media pages (twitter and facebook), as well as the IJR's database.

The target stakeholders were identified as organised youth structures (across sectors), young activists/social entrepreneurs, and youth in business, youth in the creative arts, students and unemployed youth.

The following are a list of organisations that were represented and participated in the youth dialogue which serves as the basis for the recommendations provided in this submission.



Youth discussing the National Draft Youth Policy



Youth discussing the National Draft Youth Policy

List of participants and their affiliations:

	Full Name	Organisation
1	Linda Dziba Niki Alexander	Educo
2		Researchers on Peace building and youth studies
3		Active youth program
4	Angelique Thomas Danielle Hoffmeester Elaine Pypers Louis Law	CPLO
5	Sandile Mntungwa	Fusion Works
6	Earl Mentor	Desmond Tutu Foundation – HIV Youth Foundation
7	L. Rasool	Activate!
8	Emily Frame	Saldru – UCT (Research unit on youth)
9		City of Cape Town – Department of Urban Agriculture
10	E. Ohlson	Africa Jam – Youth outreach
11	Elizma Titus Sonja Vermeulen	Swartland Municipality
12	Jeremy Maarman	South African Youth Leaders network
13	Daniel Malan Jacobs	Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation
14	Rekgotsofetse Chicane	Inkulu Freeheid
15	Piliswa Ngcwabe	DG Murray Trust
16	Mhlanganisi Siswana	Social Development & Early Childhood Development

The dialogue process

Dialogue Facilitators: Eleanor Du Plooy and Ayanda Nyoka.

The dialogue was facilitated by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and structured around three key questions:

- What would the ideal youth policy look like?
- What are the synergies and gaps in terms of the ideal and the draft youth policy?
- What are the key milestones that the youth policy should deliver on within the next 5 years?

Prior to the dialogue, participants were encouraged to read the full document to come prepared to engage with its content. A link to the document was provided in the invitation. Anticipating that not all participants would have had the time or the resources available to download and read the document, the IJR presented an overview summary of the document to facilitate an engaging discussion.

The first question on the ideal youth policy (what would you like to see in a youth policy) was discussed in plenary as a way to stimulate discussion. Participants were then divided into five small groups for the day to discuss the issue of synergies and gaps as well as key milestones. The group discussions were followed by a plenary session for report back and engagement.

1. Envisioning the future: What would the ideal youth policy look like?

Participants were first encouraged to envision what an ideal youth policy should look like to encourage creative thinking and bring forth new ideas and thoughts that may not be captured in the draft policy document. It would later serve as a basis for drawing up synergies and gaps between the ideal and the current draft policy.

The following were highlighted as key aspects that should inform and shape national youth policy in South Africa. In this report the issues are grouped under broad themes.

Implementation

- A youth policy should be implementable by outlining specific and measurable targets.

Holistic

- It should seek to enhance the social, economic and political participation of youth.

Broad economic participation

- It should focus not merely on formal employment for youth but should also integrate the informal sector as a key driver of youth employment and assets for young people.

Self-development

- It should integrate issues of identity and the important role of self-development among youth as a critical determinant of choices and outcomes. Issues of self-worth have a bearing on the choices that young people make and linked to this is a need for mentorship of youth.

Accountability mechanisms

- It should be underpinned by strong accountability mechanisms and clearly outline the monitoring and evaluation plan.

Governance structures

- It should encourage the meaningful participation of youth in governance and policy process and structures so that youth lead in their own development.

Accessibility and language

- It should be made accessible to the various age cohorts defined under youth. The younger age cohort, i.e. 14 – 24 should find it accessible and be able to engage with. It should be simplified in language and targeted accordingly.

Diversity

- It should acknowledge the diverse and complex identities of youth. The policy should factor in the role of parents, there is a key gap in terms of the training of parents most of who are wounded by past trauma and the risk that this trauma is transferred to young people.

2. Synergies between the ideal youth policy and gaps within the current National Draft Youth Policy

During this session, participants were divided into five groups and provided with the key policy priorities section of the draft youth policy. In this session the participants were encouraged to reflect on the draft youth policy in relation to the ideal youth policy or any other thoughts that may arise in the discussion in order to identify the synergies and the gaps in the current draft youth policy.

The synergies and gaps tended to overlap and the group discussion tended to focus more on the gaps. Therefore, in this report the synergies and gaps are presented together in context and are presented as emergent themes.

Emergent themes: Synergies and gaps in the current draft national youth policy (2014 – 2019)

Implementation, monitoring, and accountability

- There is a Lack of clear objective targets set out in the policy as well as a lack of monitoring and evaluation tools.
- There are no easily identifiable, specific, and measurable goals and consequently no clear indication of implementation.
- A monitoring and evaluation plan should accompany the policy to show how progress towards the objectives will be monitored and evaluated. The monitoring and evaluation plan will also serve as an important basis for accountability.
- It is also important that the policy should focus on solutions that can be sustained over the long term – often trying to achieve too much with good intentions has been shown to have unintended consequences. For example, while the no fee schools were a good initiative on the part of the government, the unintended consequences is overcrowding in these schools.

Grass-roots perspectives

- While it is clear that the policy draws on important research as a basis for the issues, interventions and priorities outlined, the perspective of grassroots organisations appears to be missing from the document.
- The document should be informed by vast literature that draws also on diverse perspectives. The qualitative insights of grassroots organisation can provide much richer explanations of the challenges and dynamics that impact on youth development. Thus the qualitative and quantitative should be seen as complementary

Youth machinery

- The current draft policy as it is only makes mention of the NYDA and the South African Youth Council as the two key institutions supporting youth development. There are of course a myriad of civil society organisations that are committed and are actively involved in youth development and are having a tremendous impact on youth development in the country. The policy should inform itself of these initiatives to have a proper analysis of youth development machinery in the South Africa. This will also reduce duplication which is a key concern highlighted in the draft policy. From this view, the youth policy should be informed by what already exists and how that which exists and is effective can be scaled up. In addition, government should provide more support to these civil society machineries of youth development.

Psycho-social development

- The material development of youth should also happen alongside processes of self-development. The majority of young people, in particular those from underprivileged backgrounds battle with feelings of self-worth and this has an impact on the choices that young people make and to a large degree can lead to self-destructive behaviours.
- The role of parents is also important in the area self-development as the prime caregivers and agents of socialisations for young people. To what degree is the past trauma and woundedness of parents transferred to their children? - This should be a key consideration to put in place support structures for parents and youth.

Youth agency and voice

- Young people have agency which they have demonstrated in various forms through the leadership roles that they take on in their communities and broader society. The draft policy does not sufficiently cast youth as agents of change and therefore the proposed solutions risk being too reliant on government. There is a need to tap into and cultivate the leadership role that youth are already playing in society in order to contribute to the broader objectives of the policy. In addition, there is a need to draw lessons from the ground, from youth themselves on how young people are making an impact in terms of addressing the education crisis, etc.

Heterogeneity of youth

- The policy acknowledges that youth is not homogenous, however, the policy appears to have an umbrella approach. This is made clear in the gender dichotomy contained in the document. For example, the document refers to youth as either female or males. Young people embody complex and diverse identities, including LGBT identities which are not factored in the current draft document. As a result of its binary gender focus, it is not able to address the issues of sexual orientation and their impact on youth.

Political participation

- A notable gap in the policy is its silence on enhancing participation of youth in the political sphere. As it has been the case to encourage and lobby for the participation of women in politics, similar processes should follow to encourage youth participation in political structures.

Institutional fragmentation

- The policy should address issues of institutional fragmentation within government which further constrain cooperation and integration of youth development. For example, at the local government level there are often difficulties with working with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

Youth enterprise development

- The development of youth enterprises as a key priority contained in the draft policy is sound; however, there should be measurable impact on the ground. In addition, it should not be taken for granted that youth will make successful entrepreneurs through the provision of funding mechanisms. Rather there should be concerted effort to introduce curriculum reforms to teach entrepreneurship and enterprise development in schools.

Citizenship and social cohesion

- Citizenship and social cohesion – there is no specific intervention here and lacking what the other sections of the policy has. What does it mean? How do we begin to address that?

National pride and volunteering

- It is commendable that youth are encouraged to volunteer as an expression of national pride. However, on the one hand this should be viewed against the background that majority of youth in South Africa are from low income households, are without jobs and therefore this may not be their first choice. To encourage youth to participate, the volunteer programmes should be linked to incentives that youth can claim later, for example either as additional points that they can use to gain entry into formal education and training programmes. This is likely to garner more support among the youth.

Youth employment

- There is a concern about the role of internships, the extent to which they help young people build skills and launch their career into a positive trajectory. The policy should consider labour market interventions to monitor the quality of internships, more important the extent to which they progressively build skills. In some instances, internships are badly structured and there is very little opportunity offered for the young person to grow skills.

- In addition, there should be much more commitment from the private sector to invest in youth as they will ultimately accrue the benefits.

Legislative interface

- There should be reference to the children's act in the policy and not just as background. The act should be integrated into the youth policy document.

Accessibility and Language

- The language of the draft policy is not accessible across the age cohorts defined under youth, in particular the younger age groups (14 – 24). There is a great deal of disjuncture in the language of the policy and the language of youth – it should be youth friendly.

Youth charter

- There is a need for a youth charter that represents all the interests of youth. As it stands the document isn't from a common voice.

What should the key milestones be in the next five years?

The last session focused on the key milestones over the next five year period in relation to the current draft policy and the gaps that were identified. The milestones presented here are not presented in any order of priority; they are viewed as equally important.

Economic participation & rural economy for rural youth

- The next five years should fast track the economic participation of youth. In addition, opportunities for the rural economy should be a key milestone achieved in the next five years. In relation to the rural economy, the policy should seek to bridge the gap between formal western education knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems.

Education skills development

- Equality of opportunity in education should be a key milestone, focusing on quality teaching across the school system.
- Increase the success rate of student in higher education by introducing a foundation year that prepares students for university.
- Increase financial aid funding for higher education
- Provide support for youth work practitioners for the recognition of their qualifications and employment
- Improve the interface between the labour market and supply side institutions to ensure that young people are equipped with relevant and tangible skills to facilitate entry into the labour market.

Healthcare and substance abuse

- Create effective community support networks – support groups for youth
- Public schools and communities should have readily available social workers and councillors.
- Invest more in campaigns that encourage youth to go to clinics and raise awareness about risky sexual behaviours. These campaigns should encourage intergenerational dialogue.
- Youth come from homes that believe and make use of traditional healers, therefore the healthcare system should be more integrative and not stereotype and marginalise those that choose to use traditional healing methods.

Nation building & social cohesion

- Develop an innovative marketing campaign for youth day, focusing on rebranding, bracelets etc and connect to a broader narrative that connect youth to current issues and is inclusive of all racial groups.

Optimising youth machinery

- The youth desk in the Presidency should be made more accessible and should facilitate ongoing dialogues with youth.
- Mainstream youth policy in government department and national budget
- Conduct an audit and analysis of youth development organisations
- The government to channel funding to youth organisations in communities, these organisations are often more accessible to young people than the NYDA offices.