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**LESSONS FOR THE SECOND GENERATION OF YOUTH POLICY
IN SOUTH AFRICA**
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Introduction

The *HSRC Youth Policy Round Tables* are convened at a very opportune moment for South Africa. This year, a decade after the adoption of the first National Policy in 1997, a second generation youth policy will be debated and discussed. This provides the space to review the lessons from the first ten years, reflect on whether our understanding of the ‘youth question’ has and should change, and to look towards the next decade in youth policy.

Of course as most policy analysts will tell you, a decade is not a very long time in the evolution of public policy. However, if one takes the view of the generational theorists such as Straus and Howe (1991) that a generation shift usually takes about twenty years, South Africa is about halfway through its shift in generations which follow the end of apartheid. Since youth, at the end of the day is a transitional stage, time matters and taking stock of whether we made a difference over the last ten years is therefore necessary.

The National Youth Development Forum, a coalition of organizations concerned about the so-called ‘lost generation’ of the 1980’s, during the early 1990’s phrased the objective of a national youth development in the following terms: “to reverse the marginalization of the (then) current generation of youth and to prevent the marginalization of future generations.”

At the time, what the NYDF was talking about was firstly the compounded impact of the crisis in education, the rising problem of youth unemployment, political instability and social incohesion on a particular generation of young people – the young lions of the

1980's. It was feared that not only were they deprived having to grow up with the disadvantage of apartheid and the impact of the political and social instability of the period, but also that once change happens, that they would not be in a position to make use of the opportunities of the new South Africa. Secondly, the NYDF recognized the importance of prevention, of addressing at their roots the causal factors which push young people to the margins: dropping out of school before completion, poverty, unemployment and generally the lack of options available to the majority of South Africa's young people.

Thirteen years after the transition to democracy, the fundamental questions is whether South Africa's developmental trajectory and its youth policy provide all its youth with adequate opportunities to meet their full potential and provide an enabling environment for future generations of young people? To answer this, we must look at the questions before this roundtable, such as where and how youth policy features in our national developmental agenda given the demographics of South Africa, and whether we have been effective in mainstreaming youth policy in our national agenda. Are the institutions and policies we have in place effective?

This address will focus on these questions by exploring firstly how youth are defined and the reasons for a focus on youth as a public policy issue. It will then review the lessons from the first generation of youth policy and raise some issues with regards the second generation policy which is under discussion.

PART 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

Thinking about youth in South Africa

Apart from official definitions of youth, there are a number of ways of thinking about youth. Firstly, the official definitions. Du Toit (2003); and Mlatsheni and Rospabe (2002) note that even in South Africa's official documents different definitions of youth

are used. Since these definitions are as a rule based on youth as a stage in the ‘life cycle’, it is an age range definition.

The National Youth Commission Act (1996) and the National Youth Policy 2000 (1997) define youth from the ages 14-35 years, although the NYC recognises the different needs of different age cohorts within this wide age range (National Youth Commission, 1998). In the subsequent National Youth Development Framework 2002-2007 developed by the National Youth Commission (2002), the definition was amended to refer to young people in the age ranges 15-28 years¹. The official United Nations definition of youth is the 15-24 years age range, which is also the age range for the analysis of the youth labour market (YLM) by agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the OECD is also 15-24 years. Mlatsheni and Rosbabe (2002) note that since Africans complete school much later than other groups, there is a strong motivation for extending the definition of youth (from a labour market perspective) to 15 to 30 years. This way of thinking about youth is located in the life cycle and transition to adulthood approaches. Within these approaches, the stage of youth is one of the critical periods in the human life cycle, encompassing the two transition stages of adolescence and early adulthood and more broadly the transition to adulthood (Arnett, 1997 quoted in Morrow, Panday and Richter, 2005). The approaches look at different milestones in young peoples’ transition to adulthood: sociologist Furstenberg (quoted by Ebner and Henning, 2004), noted that “the most important milestones are completing school, establishing an independent household, and being employed full-time..” Furthermore, the stage of youth is also a stage of learning – “a crucial time for developing life and livelihood skills, accessing new information and knowledge, and experimenting with cultural, artistic, and physical expression with peers” (Worldbank:2007)

Yet another way of thinking about youth is to look at what it represents in contemporary culture – in a positive way the sense of renewal, of energy and risk-taking or the same

¹ The NYC (2002:7) notes that government documents use different definitions, for example: the White paper on Social Welfare defines youth as ages 16-30 years; Correctional services refers to young offenders as those ages 14 to 25 years; and the National Health Policy Guidelines focus on adolescent and youth as those ages 10 to 24 years.

characteristics in a negative way, lack of experience, impatience and recklessness. During the 70's and 80's, it was exactly these characteristics of young people which made them such an important force of mobilization against apartheid. At the same time, it was a double edged sword, which Jon Quelane, quoted in Mokwena (1999) bemoans when he said:

" If is true that a people's wealth is its (youth), then South Africa is bitterly and tragically poor, if it is true that a nation's future is its (youth), we have no future, and deserve none. We are a nation at war with its future. For we have turned our (youth) into battle hardened soldiers who will never know the carefree joy of childhood. What we are witnessing is the growth of a generation which has the courage to reject the cowardice of its parents and there is a dark and terrible beauty in that courage. It is also a source of great pride --pride that we who lived under Apartheid, can produce children who refuse to do so."

In the era of globalization, the characteristics of youth are regarded as both an advantage and disadvantage. The advantages being that in a fast changing world, young people are more able to make use of new developments, especially with regards to technology. The disadvantage generally quoted is the extent to which they are vulnerable to the increasing homogenization of global culture, especially consumerism and the implications for developing a sense of identity and community (Heaven and Tubridy, 2003).

The quote from Quelane also contains the third way of thinking about youth, namely as representing the future. The youth as the future often arises in the context of discussions about the continuation of tradition, culture and values, and general complaints by older generations about the loss of these by the younger generations.

The thinking about youth as the future is also another aspect of the life cycle approach, namely that interventions should be across different life stages, should be cumulative and that interventions in one generation will bring benefits to successive generations (Worldbank, 2007).

Finally, in the context of the youth development movement, issues of empowerment and integrated approaches, seeing young people as holistic beings and not merely as problems have become yet another way of looking at youth.

These varied approaches, with each contributing a different dimension to the picture of youth, are all relevant to the current debate on youth policy in South Africa.

Youth development as a public policy issue

All of the above issues mean that youth development as a public policy issue is complex and that countries' in evolving their youth policies need to approach the matter holistically, as well as build in opportunities for review and adjustment of policies and strategies. However, before we come to the review of South Africa's first generation of policy, it is useful to reflect on the reasons, apart from those mentioned in the previous section for focusing on the development of young people. There are a number of arguments put forward in the literature as to why it is necessary to focus on the development of young people as a public policy issue:-

(a) Firstly, it is argued that from *an equity and a human rights perspective*, given that young people demographically constitutes significant sections of their populations, their issues should be on the public policy agenda (Curtain, 2001). This is certainly true for South Africa, with youth broadly defined constituting nearly forty percent of the total population. It is also reflected in the concerns during elections times about youth voter registration and participation. The less young people feel that public policy does not address their issues, the less likely they will feel reasons to participate in public life (Levin, 1999).

(b) Secondly, youth is crucial to any *national developmental agenda*. Though there were concerns during the 1980's about the impact of the '*youth bulge*' on a range of public policy issues such as employment, crime, social security and housing, increasingly as developed countries are confronting slowing population growth, the advantages of having a young population are gaining. The ILO (2006) in its *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2006* report notes that "young women and men are among the world's greatest

assets. They bring energy, talent and creativity to economies and create the foundations for future development.”

(c) Thirdly, youth development measures are seen as crucial **to poverty eradication**. The (in its *State of the Youth 2003 report* (Morrow, Panday and Richter 2005:10) calculated that 20% of South Africa’s young people ages 18-24 years are ultra-poor and 21% moderately poor. After children, youth is the second biggest age cohort amongst the poor in South Africa. Moore (2004:19) argues that since “young people make up a significant proportion of the population of developing countries, as such they require a significant proportion of national anti-poverty investment, on grounds of equity alone.”

(d) Finally, ‘young people without a stake in the system are more likely to *become alienated and to engage in anti-social behaviour*’. (Freedman, 2005, p.4). A number of reports have highlighted the links between social exclusion (as a result of poverty, dropping out of school and unemployment) and anti-social behaviour. For example, an ILO (2000:5) report on young people in labour markets proposes that youth unemployment not only lead to alienation from society, but also ‘from democratic political processes, which may give rise to social unrest.’” Studies done in South Africa on the situation of young people all highlights lack of opportunities and feelings and reality of exclusion as contributing towards youth marginalization².

These sentiments have all been expressed in public pronouncements about youth development as shown by the following selection of quotes from the last thirteen years:

“Youth are the valued possessions of the nation. Without them there can be no future. There needs are immense and urgent. They are at the heart of reconstruction and development.” (President Nelson Mandela, 1994)

² For example CASE (1993),

The situation of young people in 2007

The first National Youth Policy (1997) recognized³ the importance of the demographic position of youth, that broadly defined (14-35) they constituted nearly 40% of the population. It quoted a survey at the time which indicated that whereas 58% of young white men and women have studied as far as they wished, that held true for only 12% of young African men and women. It also noted that nearly a quarter of young black South Africans had no education or only primary education. The youth unemployment rate at the time stood at 43%, against the 29% adult unemployment rate, with young women 14% more likely to be unemployed than young men. With regards the living conditions of young people, the Policy noted the provincial and urban/rural spread, access to basic amenities like health care, electricity, formal housing and water and sanitation. Crime and violence affected youth, both as victims and perpetrators. The Policy drew attention to the fact that close to 35% of young people were considered to be marginalized as well as to the racial and gender dimensions of youth marginalisation. Thus at the start of the transition, the needs of South Africa's 16.2 million young people were indeed urgent and immense.

A decade after the adoption of the Youth Policy how has the situation of young people changes? The end of apartheid clearly signaled the formal end of disadvantaged based on race, with the introduction of one Constitution, system of laws, institutions and policies which serves all South Africans. Government also introduced policies which aimed to address the legacy of apartheid and shifted resources and re-orientated the work of government towards achieving this goal. *The Reconstruction and Development Programme* sets out four pillars to this end: eradicating poverty and meeting basic needs, growing the economy, developing human resources and safety and security for all. In addition, the Constitution provides a clear framework for the promotion of gender equality.

³ Based on figures for 1995, especially the October Household Survey of 1995.

The *National Youth Policy* of 1997 acknowledges as its cornerstone the values enshrined in the Constitution; “thus situating “the development of the country’s young men and women in the context of human development as part of expanding freedom and rights, encapsulating not only the basic (first generation) human rights, but also expanding freedoms in social and economic life as set out in the Constitution of the Republic. “Potgieter (2005:4)

This enabling national framework has had a number of positive effects on the situation of young people:-

- ☑ The *Status of the Youth Report 2003* (Morrow, Panday and Richter, 2005) notes a consistent upward trend in terms of *educational attainment* of younger people, in comparison with the older segments of the population. According to Kraak (2003:p10) since 1994, there has been a ‘massification of the system, with black students constituting the majority of the population in most education institutions.’
- ☑ The policies of redress and affirmative action have meant *access to careers and jobs* previous unimaginable for black and female youth. The ANC in Gauteng (2005:8) noted the fact that for better educated young people, more opportunities are available at all levels of the occupational structure, as a result of these policies; quoting as an example the occupational category of ‘technicians and associated professions’ where employment of Africans has grown by 173% between 1996 and 2001.
- ☑ The adoption of a National Youth Policy and an institutional framework for youth development in the form of the national youth machinery (see DIAGRAM 1) and the general identification of youth as a priority target group for all policies means a real attempt at *mainstreaming youth development* in all public policies.
- ☑ Finally, the historical context of youth mobilization, as well as the post apartheid focus on participation and social dialogue has meant that youth participation and mobilization is seen as an important part of the national body politic of the country.

However, major challenges remain. . President Mbeki in his State of the Nation address to Parliament on 9 February 2007 articulated these challenges when he said: “none of the great social problems we have to solve is capable of resolution outside the context of creating jobs and the alleviation and eradication of poverty,... therefore the struggle to eradicate poverty has been and will continue to be a central part of the national effort to build the new South Africa.”

For young people in 2007 too, major challenges remain:

- ▶ Persistent challenges of basic education, including the need to improve the overall quality of education, keeping young people in school till completion, improving matric results and ensuring relevance of education;
- ▶ The *Status of Youth Report* 2003 (Morrow, Panday, Richter 2004) calculated that 20% of South Africa’s young people ages 18-24 years are ultra-poor and 21% moderately poor. After children, youth is the second biggest age cohort amongst the poor in South Africa.
- ▶ General unemployment remains unacceptably high, and it continues to disproportionately affect young people.
- ▶ The HIV and AIDS pandemic, crime and violence, the increase in drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancy continue to put millions of young people at risk.

Thus, the challenges which the second generation of youth policy in 2007 must address remains ‘immense and urgent.’ The immensity of this problem is particularly daunting when looking at the challenges facing school-leavers, and the pathways available to young people upon leaving school (see DIAGRAM 1). Of the more than 1 million people leaving school every year, only 18% of them have opportunities to immediately enter further and higher education or post secondary training (the figure is higher for Gauteng at 30% of schoolleavers). Of those who leave school and immediately join the labour market after school every year, 51% join the ranks of the unemployed and only 31% find employment in either the formal or informal sector.

DIAGRAM 1: THE YOUTH LABOUR MARKET: FOUR POST-SCHOOL PATHWAYS			
Source: Potgieter –Gqubule (2007:53)			
GAUTENG YOUTH LABOUR MARKET 2005 adapted from GPG (2005a:121)		SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH LABOUR MARKET (2000-2002) adapted from Kraak (2003:13)	
ESTIMATED 132 042 SCHOOL LEAVERS WHO ENTER THE LABOUR MARKET FOR THE FIRST TIME EACH YEAR.		ESTIMATED 1 011 000 SCHOOL LEAVERS WHO ENTER THE LABOUR MARKET FOR THE FIRST TIME EACH YEAR.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 60 660 000 drop out of school between Grades 1-11 each year o 71 382 write Grade 12 (16 574 fail Matric, 54 808 pass Matric, with and without exemptions) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 551 000 dropped out of school between Grades 1-11 each year o 460 000 wrote Grade 12 (170 000 fail Matric and 290 000 pass Matric, with and without exemptions) 	
FOUR PATHWAYS FOR FIRST TIME SCHOOL LEAVERS		FOUR PATHWAYS FOR FIRST TIME SCHOOL LEAVERS	
Post school training 30 000 pre employment training, private higher or further education and training (23% of school leavers, national average of 12%)	Public higher education 12 624 (10% of school leavers, national 7% of school leavers)	Employment 27%, as against national of 30% (29% of African new entrants, 50% of Coloured, 70% of Indian and 75% of white new entrants)	Unemployment 41%, as against national of 51%
Post school training 90 000-120000 pre employment training, private higher or further education and training	Public higher education 65 000	Employment (30%) 307 107 (29% of African new entrants, 50% of Coloured, 70% of Indian and 75% of white new entrants)	Unemployment (51%) 518 893
42 6245 (30%) of school leavers in post school education and training)		89 418 total school leavers who seek first jobs	
Total of 185 000 (18.3%) in post school education or training		Total of 826 000 first time labour entrants	

PART 2: CHALLENGES FACING SECOND GENERATION YOUTH POLICY

Lessons from international experience

As we approach the debates towards the adoption of a second National Youth Policy, there are important lessons which we can share from the national experiences of the last thirteen years, as well as the reservoir of international experiences of youth policy. Firstly, lessons from international experience. Just in the last three years, the major multi-lateral agencies have published reports on the situation of young people, which highlights the global concerns about integrating young people in national and global developments. These include the World Youth Report of 2005 (UN 2005), the report by the Secretary General of the United Nations assessing national youth employment plans (2005b), the UN report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth (2006) and the most recent World Bank World Development Report 2007, titled *Development and the Next Generation*.

I've discussed some of the lessons for South Africa in two articles published in journal *Umrabulo* in 2005⁴, but would like to highlight some issues relevant to the discussion today. In the review of the World Programme of Action for Youth (1995), World Youth Report 2005 summarised the ten priorities identified in the WPAY into three clusters: (a) youth in the global economy, including hunger and poverty, education, employment, globalisation and ICT; (b) youth in civil society, which focuses on the environment, leisure, participation and intergenerational issues; and (c) youth at risk, encompassing priority areas of health, drug abuse, delinquency, conflict and HIV and AIDS.

These clusters of issues are particularly relevant to South Africa, because the challenges of employment, education and poverty; issues of youth in civil society and of youth at risk are, this paper will argue, are the central issues which the next youth policy must address. Furthermore, the international approaches of integrated youth development and the mainstreaming of youth development have become integral part of how we think about youth development in South Africa.

Lessons from the first generation of youth policy in South Africa

A number of reviews have been done of youth policy, including by youth institutions and others institutions of government. Key amongst these is the paper by Moleke (2006) for the Presidency. The intention here is therefore not to reinvent the wheel, but to contribute towards the debates. In particular, what this paper will do is to present the lessons from the first National Youth Policy of 1997 from a public policy context perspective and framework. Within public policy analysis (Cloete and Wissik, 2000), reviews of policies focus either on the policy process (e.g. who sets the agenda), the policy content (does the policy adequately address the problem in question, were target formation and the strategy adequate), the implementation process (were targets been met, what were implementational issues and challenges) or on overall impact of policy (e.g.

⁴ The articles are Potgieter (2005) "The complex challenges facing a new generation of youth". *Umrabulo* no 23, June 2005 and "Investing in the future". *Umrabulo* no 24, December 2005.

did the policy significantly reduce marginalization or created an enabling environment for youth development).

All of these questions and issues are important, and should form a necessary part of the research agenda on youth development. However, for the purpose of today's discussion, I want to share some thoughts on a limited set of issues and questions:

- a) What can we learn from the agenda-setting process in the lead-up to the first National Youth Policy?
- b) With regards the actual content of the NYP 1997, were the goals, strategies, targets and policy instruments clear and adequate?
- c) What about the institutions and institutional framework?
- d) Finally, did we make effective use of monitoring and evaluation instruments to forward the goals of the Youth policy?

Each of these questions and sets of issues have important lessons for how we approach the next generation of youth issues, and although we may not agree on the interpretation of how they were addressed during the first phase, as a start we should agree that they have to be considered for the second phase.

Lesson 1: Youth participation is not enough

South Africa's youth policy is generally held up as an example for the extent to which it involved young people in the policy formulation process, and they are quite right. At the time of the transition, although the NYDF collapsed shortly afterwards, there was a very active youth movement, who have been involved in debates about post-apartheid youth policy for at least a few years. The National Youth Commission Act and the National Youth Policy were widely consulted and largely reflect the views from within the youth sector.

However, despite resolutions from youth gatherings calling for the establishment of a national youth commission, legislation to facilitate the appointment of a statutory committee was only finalized in 1996. According to the then Deputy President (Mbeki: 1996), this was because of ‘budgetary constraints in the Presidency.’ Nor were any of the Presidential Lead Projects announced by President Mandela in 1994 specifically targeted as youth, although after the introduction of an age restriction in school by the Department of Education, the DoE developed a policy on out of school youth (CASE, 1995).

This fairly late focus on youth development issue was, according to Everatt (2000:15), because the youth movement was so inwardly looking during the early 1990’s, it let pass an opportunity (in contrast to the women’s movement) to place its issues on the agenda as early as during the negotiations process. The National Youth Policy of 1997 also never went to Parliament, and the one piece of policy on youth which was tabled with Parliament, the Green Paper on National Youth Service of 1998 stayed there without moving towards a White paper for a long time⁵.

So, what were the problems? I think that Everatt is correct in his statement that one of the major problems was the ‘inwardly looking’ nature of the debate about youth policy. The youth movement correctly took a ‘nothing about us without us’ stance on the matter, and became very actively involved in the debates about the youth machinery and policy. However, it was by en large a debate of young people and people working with young people. There was beyond a certain point a lack of sufficient lobbying of other sectors to embrace the youth policy, and more importantly engagement with those responsible for other macro policies on how the youth policy articulates with other national development policies. In a way, the youth movement developed the policy, and then afterwards engaged other sectors on mainstreaming the policy into their policies. This also tended to be the case with the establishment of provincial youth commissions and policies. It is thus not surprising that Moleke (2006:21) in her review elicited the following response from the Commission:

⁵ Despite being tabled in Parliament in 1998, it was only adopted by Cabinet in 2003 (Moleke: 2006), five years later.

“The NYC also perceives lack of or limited buy-in from government with regard to fulfilment of its mandate. This makes it difficult for it to enforce its mandate and policy. Despite the Inter Departmental Committee there are some government departments where the NYC has not been able to secure working partnership and thus influence its approach to youth development. The department of education is one of these. Also some departments do not take their participation in the IDC seriously hence they sometimes send junior officials, there is inconsistent representation, representation by staff from line and support functions (e.g. Human Resources).”

Moleke correctly mentions as examples a host of other national policies where the NYC and the youth sector successfully lobbied for the mainstreaming of youth issues – ranging from youth employment issues in the Presidential Job Summit and the GDS, to health, welfare and a host of other policies. The National Youth Policy thus provided the youth sector with an important lobbying document to engage broader society and sectors with. In the end, I think, the NYP was more often than not perceived as a policy of the youth sector, from which departments and institutions can pick and choose what they want to integrate, unless accompanied by an active lobbying by the youth sector.

The important point is therefore that as we approach the second generation of youth policy we must maintain and even improve on the participation of young people in the formulation of the policy. But in addition, we must ensure broader debate on the policy by all sectors of society. One of the things that we must ensure this time round, is that it does indeed get tabled before Parliament and adopted as policy of the whole of government.

Lesson 2: Greater clarity about goals, strategies and target groups

*National Youth Policy 1997*⁶ lists a range of important overall goals of the National Youth Policy: encouraging youth awareness and commitment to the values of the Constitution; promoting the participation of youth in the reconstruction and development of the country; initiate actions for youth development by youth; coordinated and holistic responses to youth issues; and creating enabling environment and communities for youth development. It then goes on to list areas of strategic intervention areas to achieve these goals as: education and training; health, economic participation, safety, security and

⁶ And the subsequent *National Youth Development Framework* of 2002-2007

justice; welfare and community development; sport and recreation; arts and culture; environment and tourism and science and technology. And, it identified as target groups young women, youth with disabilities, unemployed youth; school aged and out of school youth; youth based in rural areas and youth at risk (see diagram 3).

Apart from the above, what was the strategy and the policy instruments elaborated to achieve these goals in relation to the said target groups? The strategy can probably be found in the elaboration of the principles of youth policy – namely that it advocated for integrated and holistic youth development, redress and for the mainstreaming of youth development in all policies of government. It also acknowledge that there are certain areas where there is a need for youth specific policies (e.g. in health or social development), as well as youth specific programmes (such as the National Youth Service Programme).

Policy instruments in public policy generally include laws and regulations, direct government interventions (e.g. a government or government agency programme or service); education, information and advocacy; economic institutions and self regulation (or voluntary activities). The only real policy instruments at the disposal of the National Youth Commission were education, information and advocacy and (voluntary) activities with other government departments and other public institutions. So, was it therefore merely a problem of strategy and policy instruments, or are the issues with regards the youth policy even wider? This paper would argue an unequivocal yes.

Firstly, the goals elaborated in the National Youth Policy 1997 are all very laudable, the strategic issues on target and the target groups probably in need of the most urgent interventions. However, all of these are so broadly formulated, that no actual policy choices, in the context of limited resources are made. What are those policy choices? I think the first is to have a serious debate about whether youth policy should be about creating a broad enabling environment for the development of all young people, or is it about addressing the needs of those already marginalized? Most of us would probably

argue that the youth policy must do both, *reverse* youth marginalization as well as *prevent* youth marginalization by addressing the broader environmental factors which causes it.

If we choose both, we must understand that they require very different strategies, policy instruments and target formation. Preventing youth marginalization requires firstly understanding of the broader societal factors which contribute towards youth marginalization and developing strategies to address these. These factors range from macro policy factors such as whether we have an employment creating growth trajectory or not; our developmental path as a country; progress with addressing poverty and inequality, and meeting basic needs and whether we succeed in building national unity, community and social cohesion and our family policies. It also requires an understanding of how exactly each of these factors impact on young people, whether the existing policies integrate youth issues and how. Often, it requires an understanding that within these policies youth issues have their specificity, as exemplified by this quote on poverty and young people:

“ The *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (ILO, 2006 p. 22) in responding to the question whether there is a ‘genuine need for disaggregating data into the poor who are young and poor who are old’ raised the following reasons for focusing on youth and poverty: that youth are frequently overlooked in national poverty reduction strategies and secondly, that ‘young people often face a different type of poverty compared with adults.’ It argues that existing poverty data focuses on groups trapped in poverty, whilst young people experience a more dynamic form of poverty. Young people confront different changes at the same time (work, living arrangements, personal relationships), compounding their difficulties. “Therefore,” the report continues, “recognising that youth poverty face unique obstacles imply that poverty reduction for youth might necessitate different approaches than those for adults.” (Potgieter-Gqubule, 2007:)

Because these policies are fundamentally about broader macro policies, it is often quite difficult to have clear targets in the National Youth Policy, if there have not been prior negotiations about it with other policy decision-makers. Government (at national and provincial level) will also have difficulty with agreeing to the inclusion of such targets in the policy. What has happened to the National Youth Service, a flagship programme in the National Youth Policy since 1997, is a classical example.

The general strategy which works best for this kind of broad approach is ensuring effective mainstreaming, and the strongest policy instruments to take this forward is capacity to develop policy across a range of macro policy areas, capacity for research, evaluation and monitoring and capacity for advocacy and mobilization. The downside of having the broad approach is that the National Youth Policy and by extension the Youth machinery become an easy fall guy for failures or lack of progress for anything to do with youth.

Diagram 2: TARGET FORMATION IN YOUTH POLICY

Source: Adapted from Schmidt, O Reilly and Schoman (1996)

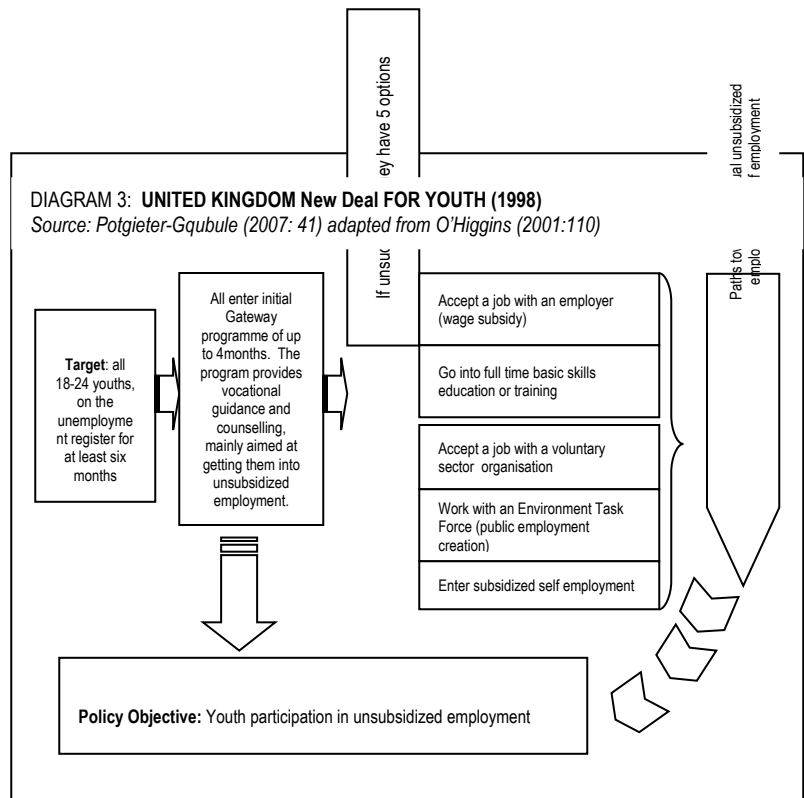
- (a) Overall goals of youth policy (broadly or precisely framed)
- (b) Targets of policy (all youth or only disadvantaged youth)
- (c) Youth development indicators to be monitored (e.g. school drop out rate, participation rate of 15-24 years in post secondary education, youth unemployment rate, etc);
- (d) Scale of policy intervention
- (e) Performance targets for specific policy instruments/and or programmes

Policies aimed at reversing youth marginalization or youth at risk of marginalization on the other hand, require a completely different set of strategies and policy instruments. For example, take one of the very broad target groups identified by the NYP 1997, namely unemployed youth. A policy goal would therefore to reduce youth unemployment, taken within the context of the national goal of halving unemployment to 15% by 2014, as elaborated in the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa. Since the rule of thumb is that the youth unemployment rate is generally at least double that of the adult unemployment rate (ILO, 2006 and Mlatsheni and Rospabe, 2002), this may include a target to reduce the youth unemployment rate from 48.4% in 2003 to 24.2% by 2014. What then needs to be done to achieve this goal – including whether the current strategies to halve unemployment are adequate and whether it also requires a distinct national youth employment strategy.

Lesson 3: Mainstreaming and Institutional framework for youth development

During the youth policy debates of the early 1990’s, consideration was given to three broad options, which were the norm in youth policy at the time. The first option was a dedicated youth ministry that would be responsible for implementation of the national youth policy and would receive a dedicated budget to this effect. The second option was a hybrid, where youth affairs is attached to another ministry, ranging from Public works, Sports, Education and Labour. The third option was a youth agency responsible for implementing specific programmes or programme area like national youth service or youth employment services agencies (like the example of the UK New Deal in **DIAGRAM 3**). The agency approach usually signaled some budgetary commitment towards a direct government intervention (programme or services); unlike a youth ministry it has some relative autonomy which makes it easier to run effective youth programmes.

Learning from international experience, each of these had their weaknesses: option one would mean that instead of mainstreaming, youth issues became relegated to junior ministry, having a ministry is often no guarantee of adequate resourcing and other ministries and agencies are absolved from responsibility for mainstreaming youth. Option two’s weakness was that very often, youth policy then was reduced to whatever main part



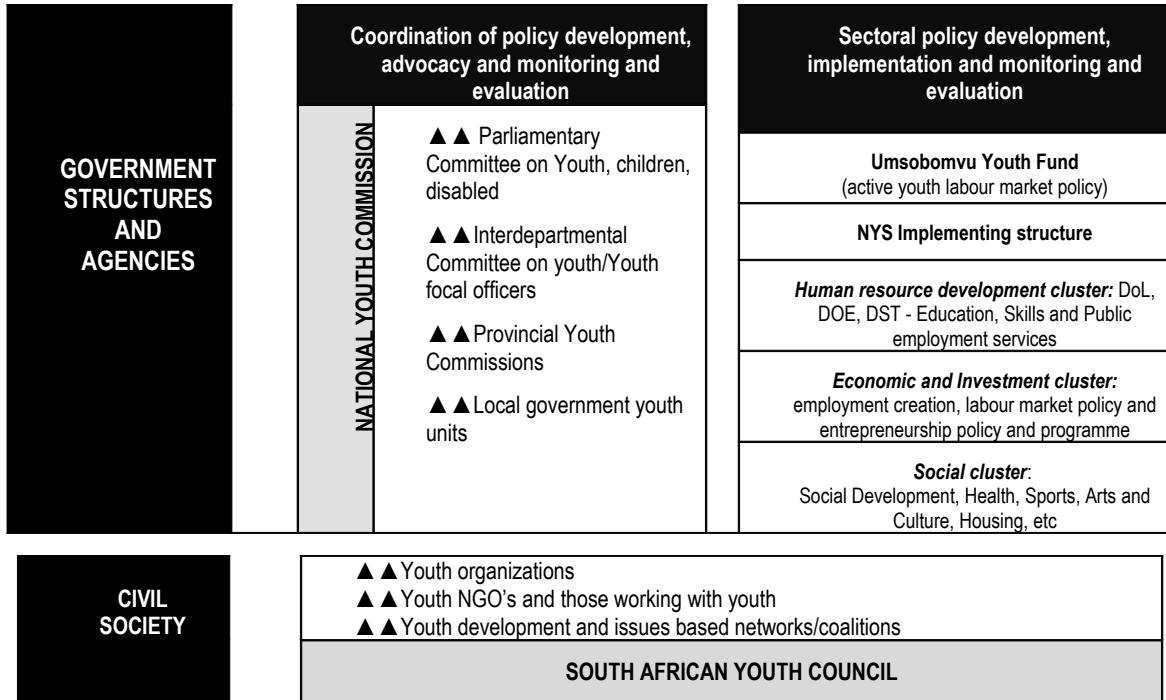
it became an adjunct to – either focusing on youth issues as about public works,

education, recreation or employment and tended to move away from a holistic approach. The agency approach tended to have the same problem as option two, and more often than not it had to branch out beyond its narrow mandate and do other 'holistic' youth development activities.

The eventual consensus was that strategically, we should definitely not seek to ghettoize youth issues, but instead opt for general and broad based mainstreaming across all policies. It was recognized that effective mainstreaming requires strong leadership and an institutional champion, and thus the consensus (with objection only from the Democratic Party Youth), for a statutory National Youth Commission, located in the office of the President, with responsibility for coordinating the development, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation of youth policy and government policy on young people.

This institutional model evolved, with provincial youth commissions, youth desks in other line departments, the formation of the Interdepartmental Committee, youth structures at municipality level and the parliamentary committee on youth. In addition, there was acknowledgement that mainstreaming would also require the active mobilization of youth in civil society, to participate, but also to help keep the pressure on and build capacity for mainstreaming. With the formation of the Umsobomvu Youth Fund in 2001, yet another dimension was added to this youth development machinery, a version of the option 3 discussed in the beginning. Thus evolved the model of the youth development machinery. However, one of the weaknesses of the original model, was the fact that it did not include other government departments, institutions and agencies who also have significant programmes which impact on young people. The South African youth development machinery in government would therefore be more accurately presented as see in DIAGRAM 4:

Diagram 4: SOUTH AFRICA'S FLEDGING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MACHINERY



Finally on institutions, a few issues about the Umsobomvu Youth Fund. The UYF in terms of its mandate approximates agencies in other countries set up to implement government's active youth labour market policies. Active (youth) labour market policies (O'Higgins, 2001 and Martin, 1998) are usually divided into employment creation, skills development, career and public employment services and entrepreneurship programmes; all aimed at addressing youth employment and labour market issues. The brief of Umsobomvu and how it has evolved its programmes are exactly that, even though we generally shy away from talking about it as active labour market policy (ANNEXURE 1).

Lesson 4: Effective use of monitoring and evaluation

CONCLUSION

South Africa has a wealth of experience and has laid quite a solid foundation for an all encompassing youth policy. We have political agreement about the importance of youth development, we have broad agreement about the importance of mainstreaming youth in all public policies and we have examples of best practice which we can duplicate and adapt across a range of different programmes.

However, the next generation of youth policy must address the major issues which this discussion has raised. Firstly, we need to deepen youth involvement in the formulation of the youth policy, and we must ensure participation of broader society in the debates about youth policy. Even if in this round we fail to convince other policy makers, but we must engage them in a serious debate.

Secondly, we have to address the question of prioritisation and proper target formation in our youth policy. There is no point having a wonderful policy on paper, but as the President said about local government, we “focus on micro projects that have very little impact... (and) no big plans for big anchor projects with large socio-economic spin-offs.” (Mbeki, 2005). This means that we have to take the time and involve a broad spectrum of inputs to develop the policy.

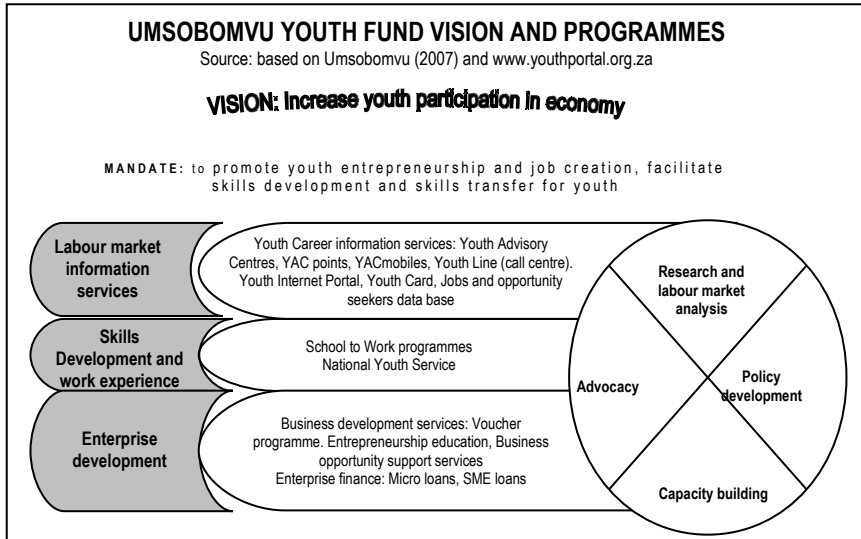
Thirdly, we must not put the cart before the horses, debating institutions, before we agree exactly on what exactly our strategy is and the type of institutions we therefore need to take forward the strategy. In addition, we must also not fall in the ‘non-proliferation of institutions’ trap. If we want to implement effective policies and programmes, we need institutions, often more than one type of institution to do that effectively, and they have to be resourced.

Finally, the role of monitoring and evaluation cannot be over-emphasised, to allow for adjustment of programme and policies, but also as instruments for advocacy and lobbying.

I would like to congratulate the HSRC for starting this initiative and for the efforts taken to ensure the broadest participation. Youth policy affects all of us, because it is indeed about all of our futures.

END

ANNEXURE 1



would be an 'acceptable indicator of success' in 2014? What are the indicators to measure whether the broad goals of youth marginalisation and social exclusion have been addressed, perhaps levels of youth participation in the 2014 elections? Could mean reducing youth unemployment by 2014 from

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