



SOUTH
AFRICAN
YOUTH
COUNCIL

TOWARDS A COORDINATED AND INTEGRATED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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OURS IS TO SUCCEED

INTRODUCTION

The dawn of democracy symbolised a new horizon to many with innumerable expectations from all sections of the community, we deemed it to be a moral, a humane and caring society. This was motivated by the fact that revolutions by their nature, seek to replace one social order by another, mainly concerned with human beings and the improvement of their condition. Young people were not impervious from such prospective. Hence the necessary steps had to be taken in making sure that their needs find expression in government policy.

Various processes have unfolded since the new democratic dispensation ushered in, they resulted in policies and institutions being developed meant to redress the deliberate imbalances of the past.

Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana saw young people as a result of a combination of the following factors:

Intellectual engagement and commitment to the pursuit of Truth; a search for solutions to problems that confront contemporary society; and a youthful courage and ideal To change one's surrounding to improve upon what had been achieved by the previous generation.

Dr Ndletyana is posing a challenge first and foremost to us as young people and primarily as members of the community; and a need to do an analysis as to whether we do pursue truth or engage into intellectual discourse to bring about change to the communities we find ourselves in. young people must ask themselves difficult questions such as, what have they done to improve the livelihood of our people as a whole?

The South African Youth Council resuscitation is heeding the call made above, ours is to “search for solution” to problems confronting primarily young people in this province and generally the community, in doing so we shall embark in a rigorous program to engage everyone regardless of social and political standing in making sure that at the end society as a whole is a winner, as we can't continue entertaining pettiness which is a manifestation of our difference of opinion.

Indeed it would be naïve of us to view youth development as an ivory tower to the entire society; as they are indissoluble. We have a colossal task to lead the way on how youth development should ensue; we have to put more emphasis on **constructive youth development**. This should be guided by values and belief systems; the social, cultural, economic contexts and trends of our country, Contrary to what we are currently experiencing, today young people view themselves as detachment of the society as they view societal problems as those of the government and don't see themselves as role players in addressing social ills

Our working definition of Youth Development for the purpose of this document shall be as follows:

The ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged | attempting to (1) meets their basic personal and social needs be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded, and (2) to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their lives. (Pittman, 1993, p.8)

This definition precisely describes youth development as a process in which young people are supposed to discover their capabilities in pursuance of the fulfilment of their needs. Also what is great about it is that it uses the word '*engaged*' meaning young people have to determine their own destiny by being actively involved; and should not wait for things to be done for them.

There's also a quandary in this definition, in that it poses a *sine qua non* on the society's part, as it requires them to provide psychological security for young people to unleash their full potential, when a new democratic dispensation that was meant to be characterised by egalitarianism ushered in, it was of paramount importance that redress policies be crafted in realisation of a caring society that take its future and development as a whole serious.

ABOUT SAYC

The **South African Youth Council (SAYC)** is a product of the country's history & future. Its formation in 1997 recognized both the role played by the youth in the liberation of South Africa and its contribution to the development of South Africa.

SAYC is an autonomous, non-partisan & representative body of youth in civil society, whose member organizations are drawn from different backgrounds & sectors. This makes SAYC a voluntary association of civil society youth organizations. We represent the interests of young people that are organized in a vast spectrum of involvement including but not limited to political youth organizations, faith based youth formations, student organizations, business sector (youth chambers of business), sports arts & culture formations, NGOs, voluntary and single issue based youth organizations (as illustrated in Figure 1 below).

Its diverse membership provides **SAYC** with a competitive advantage in serving as the "**Voice of Youth**", and unifying convergent views into a common agenda for youth development. **SAYC** also seeks to ensure participation of young people in national development initiatives aimed at young

people & more broadly to contribute to the social, economic & political life of our communities & country.

SAYC, as a civil society organization and a non-governmental youth organization remains the largest youth representative in terms of its affiliates and the wide spectrum of youth these affiliates represent.



Figure 1: Illustration of SAYC Member Organization Sectors

SAYC existed in the Western Cape before but due to a myriad of reasons which include *inter-alia* but not limited, resources and capacity, due to mounting challenges in our province and a lack of co-ordination of civil society youth organizations the youth sector has been weakened as such many organizations operate in silos equally there's no authentic youth voice in this province, as such there's no proper lobbying and advocacy in making sure that issues affecting young people find expression in government programs and that youth development is mainstreamed within government departments.

The Youth civil society in the Western Cape has been relatively weak in the past few years; indeed there were structures at the provincial level assigned to take care of the interests of young people in the province, However these structures became ineffective because they were too political and not representative of all sectors organizing young people hence they became a battle field for those who had political differences in their political organizations. Equally some saw these structures as quick money making schemes to advance their self-centered interests at the expense of helpless young people who find themselves outside the mainstream of the economy.

We have come a long way since 1994, when the new Constitution and Bill of Rights, which express aim of promoting, gender equality and freedom for all people, including our young people. Legislation and policies have been passed to promote and provide a legislative framework for youth development in all facets of society.

THE STRUCTURES AND LEADERSHIP OF SAYC

SAYC convened its last Triennial General Assembly (TGA) from 14 – 17 August 2008 in Worcester, Western Cape Province. The TGA is our highest decision making body that is responsible for receiving reports from the leadership, adopting the programme of action for the three year period, and electing new leadership.

From our TGA, we emerged with a committed team of dynamic young leaders who represent various sectors of youth participation.

SAYC also has Provincial Executive Committees that exist and operate in all nine provinces of South Africa. The Provincial Chairpersons and Secretaries of all provinces also sit in the National Executive Committee. We also have Local Youth Councils in some municipal areas of South Africa.

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HRD, HIV/AIDS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- Spread of HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy
- Continued inaccessibility of higher education to youth especially in rural areas
- Lack of career guidance
- Unavailability or inaccessibility of financial support for skills development

- Out-of-school graduates and semi-literate youth are involved in crime because of exclusion and discrimination from the local economy.
- Lack of resources for promoting economic development amongst youth
- Few youth health workers, support groups and youth centers for supporting youth living with HIV/AIDS and affected by the pandemic.
- Families, peers and partners have limited awareness of their supportive role in relation the youth infected by HIV/AIDS.

MAIN-STREAMING CHALLENGES

Many of the above challenges result from inability to mainstream Youth development. In part this is both symbolised by and resulting from low levels of youth mobilisation, limited targeting of youth in Service delivery processes and a lack of resources to contribute to youth development; these challenges can also be attributed to the continued lack creative leadership both from government and the youth sector

To full-fill this role, another significant cause is the absence of a structured engagement of youth in the IDP process, including budgeting, and the LED forum. Even ward forums continue to marginalize youth. The entire activities currently taking place occurs without a clearly guiding strategic framework understood by all stakeholders within Youth Development fraternity.

Whilst recognizing the need for youth-driven and youth-center development programmes and services, the needs, opportunities and challenges facing young women and men are the concerns of the whole society. Youth development should be recognized as an important mandate for all government agencies, non-government organizations and development institutions.

TARGETED YOUTH

We have decided to apply a targeted approach when it comes to our mode of operation because it is our belief that not all young people require urgent attention hence the following groupings.

However this does not suggest that other groupings will be placed on the periphery.

- Unemployed youth
- Youth living with disabilities
- Youth in rural areas
- Youth in conflict with the law
- Youth living with HIV and Aids and other communicable diseases
- Youth abusing dependency creating substances
- Orphaned youth
- Teenage parents
- Unskilled youth
- Illiterate youth

PROGRAMMES FOCUS AREAS

Some programmatic focus areas we engage upon as SAYC:

- Capacity Building for SAYC, its member organizations and the broader youth sector
- Democracy, Civic Education, and Social Cohesion
- Research & Policy Advocacy
- Education & Skills Development
- Youth Employment and Economic Development
- HIV and AIDS

SUB COMMITTEES

Given the above as SAYC we've structured our work into the following sub-committees:

- Organizational Development
- Resource Mobilization

- Research and Policy Advocacy
- Gender
- Education

PARTNERSHIPS & REPRESENTATIONS

SAYC serves as the youth sector representative in the following strategic bodies at the national level:

- NEDLAC: This is a national platform for social dialogue on socio-economic policy discourse. Nedlac is constituted of government, business, and labor and community constituencies.
- SANAC: This is the highest national body that provides strategic and political guidance to the national response against HIV and AIDS.
- NSA: The National Skills Authority is a body that advises government on the skills development discourse for the country.

At Provincial Level SAYC Western Cape serves in the following structures:

- Premier Council on Skills
- Technical Working Group on Skills
- Provincial Development Council

SAYC represent the youth sector in many other national and international platforms. We work with various stakeholders in fulfilling our mission.

SHORT TERM EVENTS/PROGRAMMES

- Jobs for Youth Summit
- Youth in Human settlement summit
- Post-School Education and Training Summit

CONCLUSION

As SAYC provincial task team having learnt from the mistakes committed in the past, we have said that under our leadership we have to be guided by certain principles as values if we are to build an effective and efficient structure that appeal to young people regardless of color, race, and creed. In our mode of operation and work we shall always be guided by the following: ***geographical consideration, demographic appeal, transparency, diversity, integration, inclusiveness, non-partisan, anti-corruption, sustainable development and social cohesion***. We have adopted these principles based on our analysis of what has hampered operations of youth development structures in this province before. We are in the process of revamping our image across the province, in doing so we've met with several stakeholders such as Youth organization, NGO's, CBO's, and regional youth councils including those responsible for youth development in municipalities.

We have thought that the most relevant office to work with at the level of the province if we are to have a seamless operation, as we are intending to build strong but independent working relations moving forward. This can be done through us identifying common programs we can embark together upon, we have outlined above some of the programs we intending to pursue.