



Youth Conversations for Action: Towards a Basic Package of Support for Youth

January 24, 2017

Philippi Village

Cape Town

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Executive Summary

The *Youth Conversations for Action* workshop built directly on to the work of the 2015 *Child Gauge*, which focused on Youth and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty. One of the overarching recommendations in the Gauge, was to begin to explore what a more comprehensive package of support for youth could look like: in a context of high levels of youth unemployment, insufficient jobs, skills mismatches, low access to quality education and low educational outcomes, low levels of productive social capital and, seemingly, no immediate possibilities to bring about big changes in many of those structural constraints, the Conversation Series want to explore what it is that society and government *can* do to alleviate levels of deprivation among young people and to enable them to create pathways to a better life.

The overall aims of the Conversation Series are thus: to define what a basic package of support for youth should include and to develop a research and policy agenda that could move this support package forward. The task at hand is to design a basic package of youth support with clear recommendations, by year-end.

There is an established knowledge base for this conversation on how to support the youth of South Africa. We know that youth is not a homogenous group. They vary in age, in gender, in race, in family composition, in skills, in aspirations, in ability – and therefore in their needs for support. Different interventions will work for some but not all of those targeted; nuances in the design and implementation of the interventions are therefore crucial; innovation and dedication are required.

The first Conversation identified a range of areas in which change would be needed, in order to support youth more holistically. For all of these, it will be important to explore further what is already in place and what is still needed. Importantly, while many action plans may suggest the need for new interventions, attention should also be paid to ways to adapt and improve *existing* efforts.

1. Financial support: Support for the youth of South Africa could take the form of an extension of the Child Support Grant or a youth-specific or generalised Basic Income Grant. This would alleviate financial hardship and could help with the cost of, e.g. education and job search but it will not improve the quality of education, or create skills that support work-readiness, or work towards better connections between existing services. Therefore, the following points cannot be overlooked:
2. Educational reform: this includes revisiting the debate over free higher education, but also focusing on accountability and quality improvements to early education. A support package should help young people stay in and complete secondary school and move on to higher education and/or the workplace. Better connections between the various parts of the educational system are needed.
3. Employment: It is not yet clear whether the Youth Wage Subsidy has made an impact. It does not seem to be creating new jobs, but rather helps filling existing ones. It also does not deal with the issue of skills shortage among youth. Other

interventions include matching youth to jobs but they too could benefit from a more holistic approach that includes, for instance, psycho-social support and mentoring.

4. Spatial inequality and transport: spatial inequality of the past has not been dealt with. As a result, transport costs are high for youth looking for work, but living on the outskirts of the cities or in remote rural areas. What can be done about this?
5. Access to information: young people consistently ask for better and more affordable access to information. Cellphone data and internet cafes are expensive but are needed to look for opportunities for education and work. How do we create more efficient connections between existing services that could increase that access to information?
6. Health: interventions exist, e.g. there are so-called youth clinics, but these facilities are often over-crowded, under-funded and not truly 'youth friendly'. Many interventions overlook aspects of emotional and psychological health.

Indeed, the Conversation identified many gaps in existing services. Few, for instance, address 'Black Tax' and support young people with family and community responsibilities. Programmes that support the psychological needs of young people and that can provide mentoring are sorely lacking, and would be needed in several of the identified areas listed above.

Finally, the process of creating a package of support needs to be interactional with youth and will also need to be adapted over time, as youth needs change. Any current or new intervention must be coupled with an information campaign that can communicate with youth and to youth.

The combination of the pieces described above should create a package of youth support that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Programme



Youth Conversations for Action: Towards a Basic Package of Support for Youth

Hosted by: UCT's Poverty and Inequality Initiative (PII) and the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship at UCT's Graduate School of Business (GSB), the Programme to Support Pro-poor Policy Development (PSPPD) and The Economies of Regions Learning Network (ERLN).

Venue: MTN Solution Space, Philippi Village, 1 Cwangco Crescent, Philippi, Cape Town

Date: Tuesday 24th January 2017

Overall aims: 1) To identify and agree on the content of a basic package of youth support.
2) To design a research and policy agenda to understand: what is currently in place, what is working, what is not working, what needs to be added, and what would it cost?

8.30 – 9.00	Registration and tea/coffee. <i>Please be seated by 9:00</i>
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9.00 – 10.30	Performance of <i>The Fall</i> , followed by brief Q&A Cast: Ameera Conrad, Oarabile Ditsele, Tankiso Mamabolo, Thando Mangcu, Sizwesandile Mnisi, Sihle Mnqwazana, Cleo Raatus
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10.30 – 10.45	Welcome and introduction Associate Professor Mills Soko – Director of the UCT's Graduate School of Business
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10.45 – 11.15	Keynote: Key issues affecting youth in post-apartheid SA requiring redress Mr Sello Hatang – Chief Executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation
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11.15 – 11.30	Coffee & Tea Break
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Session 1	Social protection for youth – what is currently in place and what are the gaps/options? Chair: Ms Mastoera Sadan – Programme Manager, PSPPD
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11.30 – 11.50 **Youth-oriented grants: what are the options, what would they cost?**
Dr Maureen Mogotsi – Director: Children & Family Benefits, Department of Social Development (DSD)

11.50 – 12.20 **Discussion panel: options beyond a youth-oriented grant?**
Prof Murray Leibbrandt – Pro Vice Chancellor of PII
Mr Thabani Buthelezi – Deputy Director General, DSD
Mr Rudzani Neshenzhe – Assistant Director for Youth Development
Ms Laura Poswell – Executive Director, J-PAL Africa

Session 2 What could a basic & comprehensive package of support look like?
Chair: Dr Ariane De Lannoy – Senior Research Officer, PII

12.20 – 12.40 **Designing a comprehensive intervention for youth: Vulindlel'eJozi**
Mr Rob Urquhart, Executive Knowledge and Impact at Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator presenting on behalf of the Gauteng Department of the Premier

12.40 – 13.00 **Bumb'Ingomso**
Ms Janet Jobson – Programmes Director, DG Murray Trust

13.00 – 13.30 **Respondents: Youth panel**
Chair: Ms Hetile Mabunda – IkamvaYouth Communications Coordinator
Ms Andiswa Mafuya – Youth voice
Ms Sithandwa Ngwetsheni – Lead SA
Mr Esona Makinana – Raymond Ackerman Academy Graduate

13.30 – 14.00 Lunch

Session 3 Policy Discussion Panel
Chair: Ms Solange Rosa – Senior Policy Adviser, Bertha Centre

14.00 – 15.00 **What is currently already provided for in policy? What are the gaps in a basic package?**

Mr Dhiresh Ramklass – Principal Technical Advisor: Economic Development, GTAC
Ms Yoliswa Dwane – Chairperson, Equal Education
Ms Najwah Edries – Head of Jobs Fund

15.00 – 16.00 **Drawing the contours of a Basic Package of Support: facilitated session to work out a problem tree, assign research & policy responsibility going forward**
Mr Matt Cullinan – Senior Technical Advisor: Government Technical Advisory Centre, National Treasury

16.00 – 16.10 Coffee & Tea station

16.10 – 16.40 **Feedback from small group work: suggested workplan**
Mr Matt Cullinan: Senior Technical Advisor: Government Technical Advisory Centre, National Treasury

16.40 – 17.00 **Closing note & way forward**
Prof Murray Leibbrandt – Pro Vice Chancellor, PII
Dr Ariane De Lannoy - Senior Research Officer, PII

Summary of proceedings

Welcome and introduction

Mills Soko

Attention to youth entrepreneurship in South Africa is a critical issue at the UCT GSB. The school is working to respond to the challenges faced by the country and continent, and to stay relevant to the sociopolitical and economic context in which it operates. The opportunity to be part of the day's work allows the GSB to demonstrate that it is relevant, responsive, and committed to playing a role in contributing toward change and development in SA and throughout the continent. The challenges are known: unemployment, inequality, and poverty. Young people are over represented in these groups. Facets of the UCT GSB are already dedicated to responding to these challenges and supporting youth entrepreneurship. The UCT GSB pledges continued engagement and participation in initiatives of this nature.

The Philippi Village satellite campus, where we are meeting, will formally launch later in 2017. It is the first and only campus of its nature in the history of UCT. It will be used in collaboration with the local community, forging a working relationship with Philippi and other surrounding townships to find solutions to the common challenges that they face. It is a site where the GSB can demonstrate practical relevance.

The UCT GSB looks forward to the practical outcomes of today's meeting, and commits to the implementation of the outcomes.

Keynote: Key issues affecting youth in post-apartheid SA requiring redress

Introduction: Murray Leibbrandt

This work follows on from engagements on youth and education and youth and the labour market, and this year's work is to focus on a basic package of support for youth with the aim to have a clear recommendation on this by year-end. Sello Hatang's credibility, voice, and work are fitting as a foundation for this national dialogue.

Keynote: Sello Hatang

So much of the play (*The Fall*) resonated with student experiences of the 90s. These issues are not unique, and are further upsetting as one hopes the future doesn't relive the

experiences of the past. So we ask: Have we done enough? Are we still on course for the dreams we set? If not, how do we get back on course?

The Mandela Foundation does a lot of work on engaging with the situation of young people. It works on issues of poverty and inequality. And it works on reckoning with the past through dialogue and memory work. But to move forward, more engagement is needed with young South Africans. The young feel alienated; they do not want to engage in rational conversation anymore. On a recent visit to Mamelodi it seemed that this township, like many others, is a fertile ground of young people waiting to be used, like stones ready to be cast. How do we bring them back in to the fold and reignite their fire?

Some studies indicate that as many as one quarter of young men use violence for political goals, especially those of low socioeconomic status. The concern is that we continue to create an environment that legitimizes this revolution. Start by looking at research on education (such as Nic Spaul's work): of 100 learners who enroll in grade 1, only 4 make it to higher education. We need to speak to the other 94 destined for a life of struggle; they are the forgotten. And youth are not just university youth. Since 1985, the number of black graduates has declined while the number of white graduates flourishes.

Success for young black people is a lottery, you have to get lucky and luck depends on coming across the right connections. We can't celebrate the luck of having connections to white men. It must be normal to be successful when you are black. Furthermore, if you are one of the lucky ones, you must also keep quiet. If you are loud, the system shuts you out. Numbers and statistics can't explain the system, the anger and humiliation of a life in poverty. Education needs, racism, lack of resources, and lack of self-esteem among young people need to be addressed. These problems can be dismantled, but where do the interventions go? Who do we target?

Our care about the educational system is insufficient. In December and January we wait for matric pass results, as if they are the only item of interest. The problem is bigger than pass rates. Something is holding us back from changing the public education system. Maybe it is because those who can work on that change move their children to private schools and then it is no longer their problem.

So how do we change the system? Start with literacy. It is the bedrock of opportunity, but literacy levels of students are too low. The barriers to workplace entry are too great. We need to rely less on university degrees and more on practical experience. Perhaps the economic barriers of getting into university are simply too great. The system is also ruthless when you make mistakes, but the youth must have the ability and opportunity to do just that: fail and come out again with a safety net. Being unforgiving of failure also means we don't support or celebrate entrepreneurship (as entrepreneurship is about trying and failing, and trying again, having learned from your previous experiences).

We also need a greater understanding of unconventional family systems (single parents, same sex parents, child headed households). What is needed is a return to the old sentiment of the young being a "child of a village" where elders and others provide support and care. We need to reject a system that relies only on two middle class parents, and

create a new system. Black Tax makes it impossible to amass wealth: it is expected that those who generate wealth will look after others (village/township, previous and future generations).

The youth of today understand that they have the power to change the system themselves. They expect to create a new narrative, and that the feedback and narrative will change with each new generation of adults. What we need is hope, action, and work. The work that is done today is for the lives yet to be born.

Brief comment: Francois Bonnici

The content provided during the morning is to set up the context to the day: history and people's stories are used to help shape the policy work. Why do this? Pulling expertise across the many domains and institutions represented today cannot be done without acknowledging the human side of the story; we must be people and professionals. [group introductions take place] We will start with what we know, begin to identify what a policy agenda will look like, identify what is working, what is not, and what is still to be done.

Session One – Social protection for youth – what is currently in place and what are the gaps/options?

Chair: Mastoera Sadan

This workshop is part of the process beyond the release of the Child Gauge, and to look at supplying “knowledge products”. This particular session will focus on what we are currently doing to support young people; it aims to highlight gaps and options to inform what a support package could look like. So: What do we propose for a comprehensive support package? What services and opportunities do young people need? And what are the trade-offs of these decisions, as the issues are interconnected. For example, if we fund higher education, it limits funding for ECD.

Youth-oriented grants: what are the options, what would they cost?

Maureen Mogotsi

There are several grants already (CSG, FCG, etc) in place but what is needed is policy to support youth the way there are policies that support children. A framework would need to cover youth from 18+, which is when the CSG abruptly ends. Perhaps one option is a broader basic income grant rather than a youth-specific grant? Youth are defined as being between ages 15-35 in SA, but we think that the focus should be on those 18-24. Youth are in a vulnerable, transitional state. They are a large percentage of the population and the labour market cannot absorb all of them, but there are not enough efficient programmes

that support them. It is unclear, e.g. that the Youth Wage Subsidy is effective, particularly in helping people in remote, rural areas.

What are our policy options? All of the recommendations that will be presented are in the infancy stage, but they are guided by the principle that everyone has the right to social security (as per the SA Constitution).

1. **Extend the CSG to include 18-24 year olds.** This would be a conditional grant where youth would need to show that they are in school or working.
2. **Unemployed assistance benefit.** This would link to a labour activation programme, offered for 6-18 months for youth with skills but without a job. It would be targeted at those aged 18-26, with the possibility of being extended under certain conditions. Recipients would need to prove they are looking for work. This programme would need to be unified with UIF and other youth unemployment efforts, and would rely on both Treasury and private funding.
3. **Universal provision of social assistance.** This would be a larger grant given to youth ages 18-35.

Where are we now? Two years ago, the ANC wanted to pursue a more comprehensive support approach. However, the Treasury went with the Youth Subsidy and the two policies could not be pursued at the same time. We need to give the Youth Subsidy time to see if it works and then review. In the meantime, the University of Johannesburg is conducting a situational analysis of youth, especially those who leave the child support grant system. Evidence from this will inform the national policy dialogue, and we can expect information for future steps from June 2017 onwards.

Question & answer session

Q: Have these options been costed?

A: The options have been costed but that information cannot be shared for now.

Q: Why do the different proposals have varying age brackets?

A: The idea is for universal coverage for 18-35 year olds to match the ages that define youth. It may be progressive, as 18-24 year olds are the group that leave the CSG immediately and are thus the most vulnerable.

Q: Is a basic income grant (BIG) still on the table?

A: BIG was put on hold because there was no mandate at the time, but there is an intention to review bringing the proposal back.

Q: Is there any international benchmarking for these programme options?

A: Yes. There aren't many broad social security programmes in Africa that are specifically for youth.

Discussion panel: options beyond a youth-oriented grant

Murray Leibbrandt

We have a large evidence base that shows that social grants like the CSG work. But before we just extend the ages of the CSG, we need to think about what the CSG is meant to do. Simply extending the ages seems an act of desperation. A youth support package should be tailored to youth, addressing their special and specific needs. Even the basic income grant would be giving up on youth; it is likely not enough and not specific enough. For instance, when we think about a basic package of support for young people, it should include an information campaign to communicate with youth and to youth. Specific attention will need to be paid to the key transitions in young people's lives (grade 9, grade 12). Successful transitions don't just happen; successful transitions require support, policy coordination and effective programme implementation.

Can we learn from what are other countries are doing? Some have a Youth Corps, so that you graduate into a job or national service. It provides a vision of a society that is unified and cohesive. India has a guaranteed employment scheme, for instance. Can we design and implement the same? The nation would have to just accept and commit to making it work. There could also be a Capital Sharing Fund, a fund to the youth couched in combating intergenerational inequality. High inheritance taxes could create an endowment of sorts that is for conditional usage to break the cycle of inherited advantage and disadvantage.

Thabani Buthelezi

The main challenge is that the state has to quantify its efforts and interventions with monitoring and evaluation. Can we track children receiving the CSG by their ID numbers, e.g.? And what about tracking recipients of other forms of social support, like living in an RDP house or attending a no-fee school? The state can quantify the amount that it has invested in this person, and monitor them over a period of time. We can then see how they are performing against their peers, and follow them beyond the CSG and other supports.

Tracking by ID numbers has obvious limitations based on what information is successfully or accurately captured, gaps arising from information being deemed "optional" by Home Affairs, etc. There might be gaps, for example, with things like immunizations. But ID number tracking, while incomplete, is very useful for beginning to tell the story of a child from birth. We might not have exact numbers, but we can start to track children to see where they are and what other supports they receive so that we can improve policies for child protection and interventions.

We can ask what the monitoring information on CSG recipients tells us about the class of 2016? There were approximately 674,000 matriculants in public schools, of which 188,000 (28%) were receiving a CSG. This already speaks to the magnitude of our poverty. Only 178,000 sat for exams (26%), and 82% of these students passed: 41% with a bachelor's pass, 40% with a diploma, and 19% with a high certificate. These are good stories we can tell, but this information can also inform our interventions such as the abolishment of the NSFAS means test for those who are receiving a CSG.

Also, more psychosocial support is needed for young people, especially self-esteem programmes. We are seeing fewer child-headed households, but more youth-headed households. Good information needs to be made available to politicians, and data must be coordinated across government departments.

Rudzani Neshenzhe

The *National Youth Policy 2015-2020* has been developed but there is no implementation plan yet. The National Youth Desk is in the process of appointing a service provider to translate the policy into an implementation plan.

The five top priorities of the policy are:

- **Skills development**- opportunities for TVET colleges
- **Education as a second chance**- for those who couldn't complete matric
- **Social cohesion and transformation**- to stop discrimination based on race
- **Substance abuse, wellbeing and crime prevention**
- **Employment**- this is related to skills development

The Youth Desk is advocating for the professionalization of youth workers: there is a need for qualified youth workers.

Laura Poswell

This is not an easy space in which to find results, but there are a few key messages from international initiatives:

- **The quality of implementation matters**- if we don't get this right, nothing works.
- **Different things work for different people; there is no silver bullet**- sometimes only women benefit from a programme, etc. So think carefully about what we mean when we talk about "comprehensive interventions": we need different options for different people to tap into.
- **We need to select people who are the right match for an opportunity**

In moving forward, we can either try new ideas, or try to do better with current ideas. An intervention with Department of Labour that has worked involves having a counselor help youth to create and adhere to an action plan, and get a reference letter and attach it to a job

application (this only applies to those who have been previously employed). Another example is the Chicago Summer Jobs Program, which has had a positive effect on taking youth out of criminality. SA has a public works programme. How can we make it better? We have examples to guide us in strengthening our institutions.

Comments and question & answer session

Comment: We often think about what is new. Maybe we do need to give more thought to what is currently being done and how we can improve that.

Q: Is the Indian guaranteed employment programme similar to our community works programme?

A: It is, but it better conceptualizes youth needs and communities decide on what they need and what will work. It is a promising intervention, but hard to scale up.

Comment: Some problems are with the attitudes we have towards young people, such as the discourse that they need to “give back”. What is needed is a shift in the perceptions of policy makers.

Session Two – What could a basic & comprehensive package of support look like?

Chair: Ariane De Lannoy

Now we move to asking what the building blocks of a comprehensive support package would be. And of those, which ones would constitute a ‘basic package’. Remember that youth is not a homogenous group. They vary by age, gender, employment or school status, etc. We have asked two interventions to present to us their comprehensive approach to youth.

Designing a comprehensive intervention for youth: Vulindle’eJozi

Rob Urquhart

Let’s not think about the path to employment as linear, but rather a zigzag path, a “snakes and ladders” way. The unemployment problem in Johannesburg is exacerbated by multiple factors: low educational outcomes, labour laws, employers who want employees with experience, lack of social networks, uninformed and inefficient labour market searches, the spatial development of cities, transport issues, and more. Working together, then, becomes an opportunity. Municipalities are an ecosystem where youth can be engaged and

employers can be enticed to move in and stay. And cities shouldn't be fixated on new job creation; there are other innovative ways to unlock existing work opportunities.

The intervention works to optimize economic engagement and focuses on areas of deprivation. Opportunities for youth include permanent job placements and starting small business ventures. There are five key initiatives:

- Placement into private sector jobs
- Analysis of viable entrepreneurial opportunities
- Short-term work and volunteer experiences
- MOOV programme- massive open online varsities
- Interventions on work readiness to help prepare youth for employment

MOOV is helping young people to complete studies; several then go on to start microenterprises.

Some observations from their results:

- We need to think creatively about training and job placement - jobs are not always connected to locations (e.g.: training for cruise line services in remote, land-locked locations). Also, the minimum viable intervention is not always the actual placement in a job. An understanding of how to be more effective in an interview, e.g., is a necessary skill.
- There has been a missed opportunity to use city bus systems to support young people looking for jobs.
- Be cautious of micro-jobbing (cutting trees, mowing lawn, etc.). The employability benefit has to feel valuable to the young person as well.

Bumb'Ingomso

Janet Jobson

The DG Murray Trust has three goals:

- Ensure all children are on track by Grade 4
- Help all young South Africans to get to and stay in their first job
- Focus on growing an inclusive and innovative society

The Bumb'Ingomso project is based in Buffalo City. The goal is to reduce new HIV infections among women by ½ in ten years. The approach believes that HIV incidence is the outcome of a range of social factors and risk behaviours (e.g.: early sexual debut, multiple partnerships, decreased condom use, increased unemployment, decreased educational attainment, etc). The model brings together actors to create a support system that can ultimately help decrease new HIV infections. Additionally, the model is designed to see young women not as the beneficiaries of a programme, but as the leaders of change in the

intervention. The critical driver of behaviour change is one's self-identity and immediate plans for improvement.

The programme adopts a multi-faceted approach. There are four types of interventions:

1. **Shaping attitudes and challenging norms:** This is the self-identity work, including enrolling young people into a leadership network, fostering drive and motivation, building mentoring and social capital networks, and building life skills and navigational capacities.
2. **Addressing gender based violence:** Developing a community audit mechanism so young people can identify safety hotspots, developing responses – especially with men – to reduce the tolerance of gender based violence, and working with healthcare, the justice department, and police around youth-friendly and sensitive responses to victims.
3. **Access to economic opportunities:** Partnering with Harambee to facilitate better work access. Also improving links between TVETs and local industries to improve access to internships and learnerships.
4. **Support for health services for young people:** The goal is to shift health delivery away from an alienating experience to one where youth needs are met in a private and confidential fashion.

The greatest challenge is formatting this into a single package with common messaging. Tracking common data across the facets is also needed. And how do we let young people have some control over the process?

Other structural challenges in the lives of young people that would need to be addressed (and that may not be too difficult to deal with) include transport issues; the cost of data: a push to zero rate mobile data for employment-related apps and sites should be possible; and trying to shift NGOs' and government's negative perceptions about young people.

Comment session

Comment: Government cannot start on a small scale, as you do with these kinds of pilot projects. Based on the Constitution, government interventions have to include everyone. Pilots like these are good, but the implications are different for government due to size and costing.

Respondents: youth panel

Chair: Hetile Mabunda (HE)

Speakers: Andiswa Mafuya (AM), Sithandwa Ngwetsheni (SN), Esona Makinana (EM)

HE: What services are available for young people?

SN: Services are available, but the problem is that people are not aware of them.

EM: And these services mostly help youth in business and not youth more broadly.

AM: The emphasis is on business, but not all youth are interested in business.

SN: It is also an issue of privilege - who has access to information. You may have a library, but the library doesn't have Wi-Fi. In rural areas, you may not even have a library, or you may have one with no books. You often get to a place because of connections and support from a single person, but then how do you help your friends or peers who are left behind?

EM: It is awareness plus resources to access opportunities that is needed. Many young people aren't getting resources support from a young age. There's no support for academic decisions, like choosing subjects, and there's no general support for youth.

HE: What about basic services and support? Health care, transport, etc?

EM: In Khayelitsha, there are youth clinics. There are libraries, but no Internet, or too few computers, or too little data.

AM: Resource centres are over-crowded and under-resourced. For example, you might have to bring your own paper to the library. But you need money to be able to buy that paper.

SN: It is said that youth are the solution, but how will you find the solution if you do not consult with youth. Government must speak to young people to understand their lived experiences, and speak to lots of people so that you get a cross-section of experiences and perspectives.

HE: What are the biggest challenges to life right now?

SN: Accessibility to spaces. Racial discrimination is real. Perceptions of not being good enough are still real. It is important to see people who look like you achieving success so that you have an aspirational model.

AM: You need to feel that you always have your own voice and be proud of it.

EM: It is challenging to balance culture with new ideas. And more broadly, the youth need black role models. Most people who achieve success leave the townships and don't return. You need to see people on a daily basis living a real, full life in the township. Youth might look up to the wrong people (such as drug dealers) if they are the only models of "success" they see. And mentors are needed to help guide youth through decisions and transitions.

SN: Mentorship programmes are essential. Young black girls need mentors. Government can introduce a mentorship programme for young people finishing university and starting work so talk about balancing life, work, Black Tax, repaying loans, and more.

HE: What is essential in a youth support package?

SN: Skills development is very important. Money is nice, but you need to build skills. And support with getting a driver's license.

EM: People don't have enough information. Many rural areas don't even have computers, and computer literacy is essential. Personal development assistance is also important. Young people need to grow their self-awareness and be supported to become more resilient. Lastly, a discussion of options shouldn't be limited to just varsity or college. Young people need help to select an appropriate career trajectory that may not include further education.

Question & answer session

Q: What supports would you have liked at an earlier age?

A: Building up resilience and getting more access to guidance, especially around schooling and options (so that one doesn't start at university and later leave because it isn't the right fit, the right programme, or time to be there). Preparation for university life would also be useful- things like how to use a computer, etc. Also, having a role model, someone to tell you to dream big and that you can be anything you want. Perhaps with someone coaching you at a younger age different career options would have seemed achievable or viable, and pushing you to be greater than perhaps you even think you can be.

Q: What have been your successes? What has helped you?

A: Self-motivation, perseverance, resilience

Session Three – Policy discussion panel

Chair: Solange Rosa

We currently have the National Youth Policy and an implementation plan is being developed. This gives us the opportunity to frame a package of services and advocate for it over the next several years. What is needed to support 15-35 year olds? What is feasible?

What is currently already provided for in policy? What are the gaps in a basic package?

Dhiresb Ramklass

Entrepreneurial activity in SA is low. One of the reasons for this is the educational system. We must not only fix the educational system, but also make space to grow entrepreneurs within the system. Quite simply, it is Treasury's view that the state cannot provide free education for all. It isn't affordable. What we need are policies that are affordable that do not indebt the next generation. Partnerships between business, NGOs, and civil society can help achieve this. A Basic Income Grant may help. Some countries (Netherlands) are going this route. Others (Switzerland) are not.

Policies and issues that need to be addressed:

- **Education**- we need to be more competitive and smarter. We also need to realise that the state cannot provide everything;
- **Creating short-term employment**- build on existing CWP and EPWP. The unemployment gap can be helped here. The issue will be about figuring out how many jobs are needed and what is affordable;
- **How do we make skills out of universities and TVETS relevant to job opportunities** – optimize already existing and funded systems
- **What are innovative ways to fill the gap**- finance and mentorship for startups?

Yoliswa Dwane

Key points from youth policy:

- **By 2020, the learner retention rate will be improved.** But how? We have not seen any improvement in this area.
- **Land reform.** Make sure young people have access to land. How is this possible when government is not even able to help with land redistribution? It is a good idea, but there is no concrete plan or budget allocation to assist with this.
- **The expansion of BEE to young people.** BEE only benefits those with certain connections and political affiliations, excluding the vast majority. BEE needs to be re-envisaged for all, and then further to include young people.
- **ECD.** Improving the situation of youth starts here. Those who complete Grade 4 have a better chance of getting to Grade 12 and later getting a job. Quality basic education is needed for all young people, especially those who are poor, black, and living in rural areas.
- **Invest in higher education.** Free higher education is not impossible.
- **Provide better quality health care, including psychological support.**
- **Youth wage subsidy.** A subsidy will never fix the unemployment problem, and research supports this.

Solutions often do not take into account the nature of the South African context. If they do not fix the context-specific problems, money is wasted.

Najwah Edries

There is no shortage of policy, and if there are so many policies and still so many problems then something is not working. We've fallen short on cohesion, prioritization, and implementation. We need thinkers and implementers working on this together. Policy isn't coming about with a balanced creation team.

Our focus has been too much on the supply side measures- skills and education. There has been no conversation about what to do to stimulate the demand side. This is what is needed to figure out how to stimulate demand for new labour in our current economy. We can start to use digitization to accelerate job creation, and make jobs at a faster rate than we are losing them.

We are also missing an opportunity for impact through workplace-based learning and internships. Many aspire to a university degree, but it is feasible or necessary for everyone to have a university education and it is not the only way to combat unemployment. Job creation and youth employment also need to be addressed through a multiplicity of programmes, social security safety nets, incentives, community works programmes, etc. to resolve unemployment and inequality. All policies must be tested and piloted, otherwise you won't learn how to tactically implement your ideas. So perhaps what is needed is a sector approach: which sectors give SA a competitive advantage? What skills are needed for those? Figure this out and target these areas.

Also, focus on the spatial inequality constraints (transport, digital skills, support networks). Improving these areas should be integrated into school curricula.

And finally, we need to build more partnerships. SA is not so good at that, but working with good partners pays off.

Question & answer session

Q: What about the youth wage subsidy? Wasn't this a way to create more jobs?

A: Employers are risk averse, so the subsidy removes the risk of hiring young people. But that should only be one part of the government's arsenal to address unemployment. It isn't enough because it doesn't create new jobs, it only fills existing ones.

Drawing the contours of a basic package of support: facilitated session to work out a problem tree, assign research & policy responsibility going forward & Feedback from small group work: suggested workplan

Matt Cullinan

What was missing?

- Supporting young people to stay in school, get matric, not drop out
- Health aspects - how do youth clinics work? What is offered? What psychosocial support is there?
- Supporting young people with responsibilities at home
- Mass programme of support for the transition from school/education to work
- Conversation about innovation and creativity
- Policy issues around higher education and if (and how) it can be fully funded for the poor, and what the mechanism for financial support for youth who are off the CSG but are not getting educational-based financial support. This is a budget and policy question

What stands out?

- Huge potential among the young, but must find the right way to support it
- How to communicate a basic package of support; how to galvanize leadership opportunity, accountability, and implementation and includes the youth as the solution
- How to improve what is currently there, such as the abundance of policy, data, etc. We know what the challenges of the broader youth population are. We both need to tweak systems to work better, but also articulate the systems to work better (like the removal of the NSFAS means tests for CSG recipients). What other ways can we articulate the system so that it is easier to navigate for young people? Maybe this should happen at a community level, not the national level.
- The variety of needs and challenges facing youth. How do we connect and get a holistic approach
- Disconnect between academia and policy makers. They are creating solutions, but for whom? We need better evidence and understanding before we rush to make solutions
- Where do the youth voices fit in to the narrative, and what will happen going forward? Do we return to the previous agenda and standing projects without considering the youth voice? The information from today must be contained in the work being done, even if it doesn't neatly fit in with what was strategised.

We need to keep in mind that youth isn't a homogenous group. Different groups of young people may face different issues. Where do youth voices fit into the narrative? How do we take this information forward?

What do we commit to? What do we commit to when returning to our organizations? And what commitment can each of us make to this process?

Stephen Lew

Commits to informing his ignorance. What is "youth in South Africa"? What is the source of their discontent? Can this discourse inform youth that are disenfranchised in other countries?

Commits to involvement with the Ackerman Academy.

Esona Makinana

Commits to being an entrepreneur and continuing a dialogue with his peers.

Ariane De Lannoy

Commits to recognizing that poverty is not normal and to trying and finding ways to bring this understanding to policy makers.

Commits to being in touch with all attendees on how they can take this process forward.

Zanele Hammond

Commits to youth, to addressing their needs.

Commits to this process, of staying and steering the committee.

Commits to sharing her knowledge of problems in communities and solutions from the academic space.

Janet Jobson

Commits to focusing less on new things and more on making current systems work.

Commits to responding to Ariane, to showing up, and bringing whatever she can.

Luvuyo Maseko

Commits to ensuring that what he does is guided by opinions from the people he is claiming to help, not just based on assumptions or readings.

Elli Yiannakaris

Commits to developing role models at the Ackerman Academy.
Commits to staying engaged in the process and contributing ideas.

Laura Poswell

Commits to scaling the J-PAL government/labour project.

Closing note & way forward

Murray Leibbrandt

Youth policy is unfolding in real time. The youth are amazing and some policies are useful; this is the starting point of our direction. What can we offer? Research, yes, but this isn't a research project. We need agreement on the principles of honoring and empowering youth, and ways of doing research and creating policy that are novel. We need inclusive and interactional policy making.

Ariane De Lannoy

Now we continue to think about what building blocks we need to bring children into independent adult life. Let's commit to defining this basic package by the end of the year. That will require a contribution from all partners. The next step will be digesting the content from today, getting back in touch, and deciding what aspects and content from today is necessary as we move forward.

Francois Bonnici

It has been a humbling process to be a partner in this process of connecting research and people. Remember to keep including voices and inputs from young people going forward.