



The Pathways to Resilience Project

Pathways to Youth Resilience: Rural adolescents in the Free State province: A contextualization of the South African sites participating in the Pathways to Resilience Study

The following report commences with a broad description of the risks facing South African youth and then narrows its focus to the risks and resources that characterize the contexts of the Black¹ South African youth participating in the Pathways to Resilience Study.

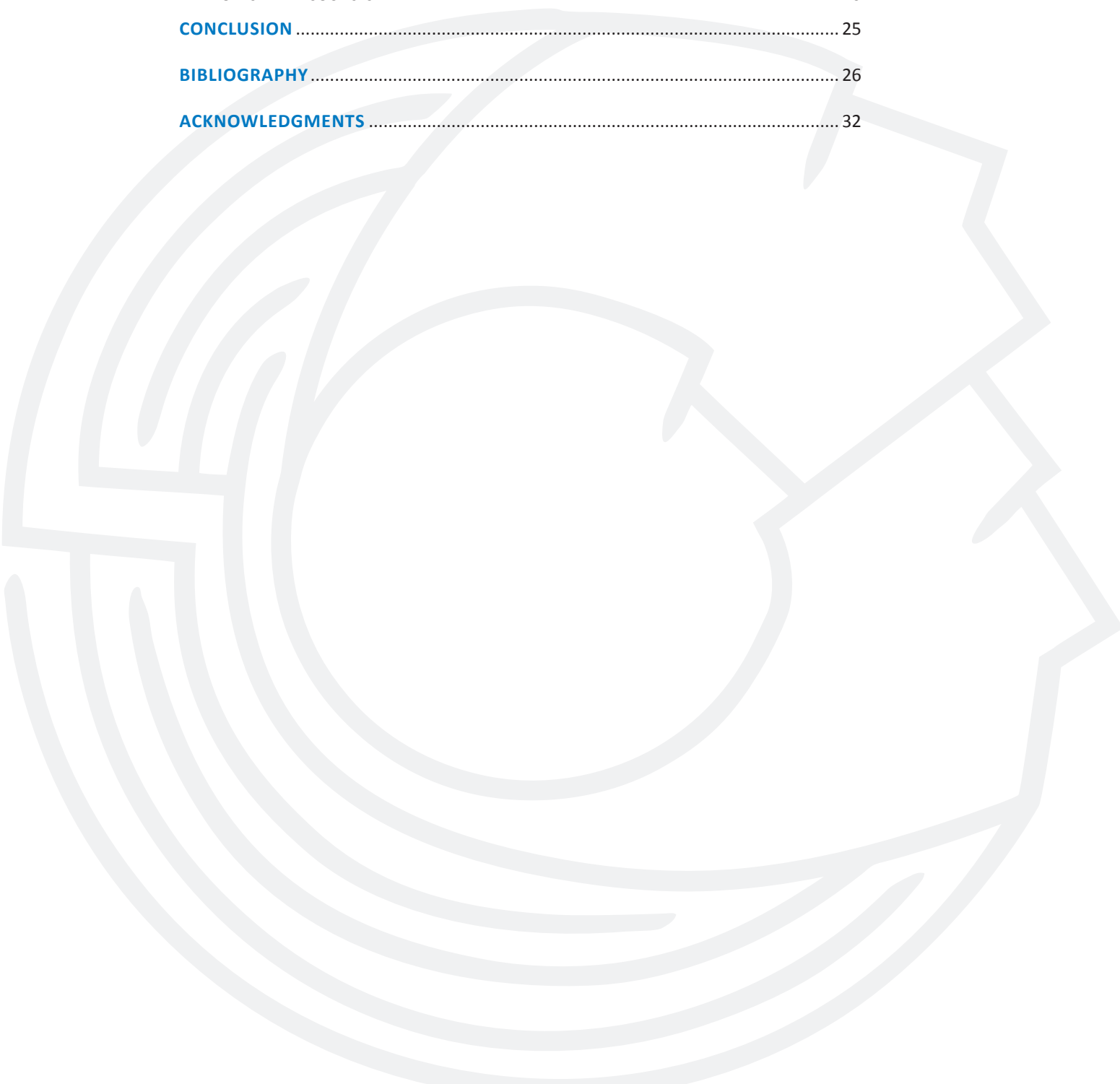
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¹ Historically, South African peoples were categorized according to race. Although racism is officially inadmissible in the post-1994 democracy, South Africans are still broadly clustered according to skin colour (i.e. Black and White).

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SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUTH: A POPULATION AT RISK

South Africa has been referred to by Zwelinzima Vavi, the General Secretary of the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), as the most unequal society in the world (I-Net Bridge, 2011). This places young people growing up in this majority world country at risk for negative outcomes. Vavi pointed out that between January and March of 2011 the levels of unemployment in South Africa had risen by one percent to an official 25% (I-Net Bridge, 2011). Youth unemployment, specifically, rose to 51% in 2010 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011). The situation is further exacerbated by poor matriculation (Grade 12) results which stymie youth opportunities for better lives. For example, only 51% of the one million pupils who were in grade 10 in 2007 wrote their matric exams in 2009 and of that figure only 31% passed (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011). Matriculation exemption only accounted for 10% of passes (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011).

Table 1: South Africa's youth at a glance

Population under the age of 18 (2008)	18 771 000
Number of pupils who passed matric (2009)	364 513
Unemployment rate for 15-24 year-olds (2010)	51%
Number of young people not in education, employment, or training	3.3 million
Proportion of 12-22 year-olds who have ever had sex	39%
Proportion of sexually active youth who have had four or more partners	32%
Proportion of sexually active youth who are consistent condom users	38%
Number of births per 1 000 women aged 15-19 years (2008)	58
Number of pupils who fell pregnant (2007)	49 636
HIV prevalence rate among 15-24 year-olds (2008)	8.7%
Proportion of HIV-positive children receiving ART (2007/08)	37%
Proportion of young people who have been physically punished by teacher/principal	52%
Proportion of young people who have witnessed violence in their community	51%
Proportion of the total prison population under the age of 25	36%
Proportion of 12-22 year-olds who have ever drunk alcohol	31%
Proportion of 12-14 year-olds who said they have easy access to alcohol	62%

Source: South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011, p. 7.

In addition to limited future prospects, Vavi commented on the moral decay of the South African society and of the effects of apartheid in aiding in the destruction of the traditional African customs that were integral in community life (I-Net Bridge, 2011). Quoting statistics he illustrated the problem of fatherless homes with nine million South African children living without their fathers even though their fathers are alive. Furthermore, old traditions that obliged men to compensate the mothers of their children are no longer in existence which has implications for the increase in teenage pregnancies. Given the aforementioned, Vavi's argument for an economy that creates jobs for its people and a society that is more equal and just in which family and community life could thrive and prosper, is convincing (I-Net Bridge, 2011).

The following paragraphs present a more detailed picture of the various risks and challenges currently faced by South African adolescents in terms of health-risk behaviours. Some of these health-risk behaviours include: risky sexual behaviour, substance abuse, violence and unhealthy eating habits. According to Reddy et al. (2008) when health-risk behaviours such as these are established in adolescence they often “persist into adulthood and may have serious consequences such as traffic accidents, suicides, violent attacks, development of chronic diseases, psycho-social problems, unwanted pregnancies and infectious diseases, such as sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS” (p. 10). Results from the Second South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey provide evidence for these health-risk behaviours among South African adolescents (Reddy et al., 2008). The following provides a summary of the findings emerging from this authoritative study.

In terms of sexual behaviour, the study found that 37.5% of learners nationally reported ever having sex. Among those learners, significantly more Black learners (39.3%) reported having had sex than Coloured (32%), White (22.8%) and Indian (17.1%) learners. Nationally, 12.6% of learners reported having their first sexual experience before the age of 14 years. As many as 52.3% of learners reported having one or more sexual partners in the past three months. The use of alcohol and drugs before sex was reported by 16.2% and 14.3% of learners, respectively. The main method of contraception reported was condoms (45.1% nationally), although only 30.7% reported consistent condom usage. The highest prevalence rate of condom usage was found in the Free State (54.7%) and Gauteng (54.1%) provinces. The Eastern Cape had the lowest prevalence rate (32.9%) as compared to the prevalence nationally (45.1%). The percentage of learners who reported ever being pregnant was 19.0% while 17.7% reported ever having a child/children and 8.2% reported that they or their partner had an abortion. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (2011) a 151% increase in pregnancies among school-going girls was found between 2003 and 2007, with nearly 50 000 school girls falling pregnant in 2007. Moreover, between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of abortions among those under the age of 18 had risen by 124% (as cited in South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011). In terms of sexually transmitted infections among the youth, Reddy et al. (2008) found that 4.4% of learners reported sexually transmitted infections and only 55.0% of those received treatment for their infection.

With regard to substance abuse, Reddy et al. (2008) found that the percentage of learners who had ever smoked cigarettes was 29.5%, current smokers were 21.0% and frequent current smokers were 12.1%. The age of initiation was found to be less than 10 years of age in 6.8% of cases. In terms of alcohol, it was found that 49.6% of learners reported ever using alcohol, 34.9% reported using alcohol on one or more days during the last month, and 28.5% were involved in binge drinking on one or more days during the last month. However, a newspaper article reported that binge drinking statistics were found to be higher in a KwaZulu-Natal study with a sample of 6747 adolescents (as cited in Hagemann, 2010). This study found that binge drinking was prevalent in 60% of matric pupils

having consumed three or more drinks in one sitting during the preceding month of the survey (Hagemann, 2010). Additionally, nearly a quarter of the sample of adolescents further endangers themselves by accepting to be driven in a car by a person under the influence of alcohol. In terms of drug abuse Reddy et al. (2008) found that the following drugs were used by learners: Cannabis (dagga) (12.7%); inhalants (12.2%); Mandrax (7.4%); “club drugs” (6.8%); Tik (6.6%); Cocaine (6.4%) and Heroin (6.2%). The situation in South Africa is further exacerbated as there appears to be a lack of drug rehabilitation programmes that are youth-focused and that are designed to meet the needs of teenagers (van Kerken as cited in Sapa, 2006). Hence the current system appears to be ineffective in meeting the drug rehabilitation needs of adolescents in age appropriate terms.

Violence is another identified risk factor for South African adolescents. Reddy et al. (2008) found that nationally, 15.1% of learners reported carrying a weapon such as a gun, a knife, a “panga” (i.e. a long knife) or “kierrie” (i.e. long stick). The percentage of learners who were involved in a physical fight, nationally in the last six months preceding the survey was 31.3%. In the same time frame, 21.2% of learners were asked to join a gang while 19.4% were already gang members. In terms of assault, 51% of learners reported being assaulted by a boyfriend/girlfriend while 13.5% reported assaulting their boyfriend/girlfriend. Ten percent of learners reported that they had been forced to have sex while 9.0% reported that they forced someone to have sex (Reddy et al., 2008).

In terms of nutrition, Reddy et al. (2008) found that 8.4% of learners were underweight and that 13.1% were stunted which is reflective of poverty and underdevelopment. This was more prevalent in the Northern Cape, North West, Limpopo and Free State provinces. On the other hand, over-nutrition was more prevalent in the more industrialized provinces like the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

The study also provided information on the emotional health risks faced by adolescents. It was found that 23.6% of learners experienced feelings of sadness and hopelessness to the point that they stopped doing some of their usual activities for two or more consecutive weeks. The percentage of learners who considered committing suicide was 20.7%, those who made plans to commit suicide were 16.8% and those who attempted suicide were 21.4%. Another problem that reflects the emotional pain felt by an increasing number of adolescents is self mutilation. In a newspaper article it was reported that young people self mutilate for reasons owing to child abuse, neglect, HIV/AIDS, divorce, family conflict and frustration (Sookha, 2005). Shamos, a counsellor at the Depression and Anxiety Group of South Africa is of the belief that people self mutilate “because it was easier to deal with physical pain as compared to psychological pain” (Sookha, 2005).

Finally, if we are to address the risk-behaviours faced by South African youth, then the various contextual factors which confront, and buffer, these youth also

need to be taken into account. Therefore, this report turns now to a focus on the contextual risks and resources of adolescents in the Free State province, given that South African Black youth participating in the Pathways to Resilience Study are drawn from the Free State areas of Bethlehem and QwaQwa.

Legal acts protecting South African youth

There are multiple acts aimed at protecting South African children and youth. We provide a summary of the prominent ones:

Children's Act 38 of 2005 amended by Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007

This act prioritises the rights of the child and enshrines the best interests of the child (South Africa, 2005). It aims:

- to give effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution of South Africa;
- to set out principles relating to the care and protection of children;
- to define parental responsibilities and rights;
- to make further provision regarding children's courts;
- to provide for the issuing of contribution orders;
- to make new provision for the adoption of children;
- to provide for inter-country adoption;
- to give effect to the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption;
- to prohibit child abduction and to give effect to the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction;
- to provide for surrogate motherhood;
- to create certain new offences relating to children;
- and to provide for matters connected therewith.

In order to achieve the above, this comprehensive act details acceptable cultural and religious practices (including virginity testing and male circumcision); parental responsibilities and rights (including parenting plans if necessary); partial care; early childhood development; child protection services; a national child protection register; protective measures relating to children's health and to child-headed households; prevention and early intervention; removal of children in need of care and protection; as well as alternative care placement (including foster care, child and youth care centres, drop-in centres, adoption and international adoptions).

Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 (South Africa, 2008a)

This act aims:

- to establish a criminal justice system for children, who are in conflict with the law and are accused of committing offences, in accordance with the values underpinning the Constitution and the international obligations of the Republic;
- to provide for the minimum age of criminal capacity of children;
- to provide a mechanism for dealing with children who lack criminal capacity outside the criminal justice system;

- to make special provision for securing attendance at court and the release or detention and placement of children;
- to make provision for the assessment of children;
- to provide for the holding of a preliminary inquiry and to incorporate, as a central feature, the possibility of diverting matters away from the formal criminal justice system, in appropriate circumstances;
- to make provision for child justice courts to hear all trials of children whose matters are not diverted;
- to extend the sentencing options available in respect of children who have been convicted;
- to entrench the notion of restorative justice in the criminal justice system in respect of children who are in conflict with the law;
- and to provide for matters incidental thereto.

Criminal Procedure Act no 51 of 1977

This act makes provision for procedures and related matters in criminal proceedings such as search warrants; entering of premises; seizure; forfeiture and disposal of property connected with offences; methods of securing attendance of accused in court; arrest; summons; written notice to appear in court; release on warning; accused: capacity to understand proceedings: mental illness and criminal responsibility; evidence; previous convictions; sentence (South Africa, 1977).

Criminal Procedure Amendment Act, no. 65 of 2008

This act amends the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (South Africa, 2008b), and aims to:

- provide for the postponement of certain criminal proceedings against an accused person in custody awaiting trial through audiovisual link;
- further regulate the falling away of certain convictions as previous convictions after the expiry of a fixed period;
- provide for the expungement of criminal records of certain persons in respect of whom certain sentences have been imposed after the compliance with certain requirements and the expiry of a fixed period;
- provide for the expungement of certain criminal records of persons under legislation enacted before the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993, took effect;
- and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Criminal Law (Sexual offences and related matters) Amendment Act, no 32 of 2007

This act governs:

- acts of consensual sexual penetration with certain children (statutory rape);
- acts of consensual sexual violation with certain children (statutory sexual assault);
- sexual exploitation of children;
- sexual grooming of children;

- exposure or display of or causing exposure or display of child pornography or pornography to children;
- using children for or benefiting from child pornography;
- compelling or causing children to witness sexual offences,
- sexual acts or self-masturbation;
- exposure or display of or causing of exposure or display of genital organs, anus or female breasts to children (“flashing”);
- sexual exploitation of persons who are mentally disabled; sexual grooming of persons who are mentally disabled (South Africa, 2007).

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY SITES OF BETHLEHEM AND QWAQWA

The Free State province is home to approximately 2, 902, 400 people with 51% of its population under the age of 24 (Statistics South Africa, 2009). The Free State is considered one of the South Africa’s most beautiful provinces with its many tourist attractions including the Karoo Sequence of Rocks, the Drakensberg and Maluti Mountains and the Golden Gate Highlands National Park. It is considered to be the country’s granary producing over 70% of the country’s grain and is rich in mineral deposits which contribute to the provinces’ economy (Wikipedia, 2010).

Since the dawn of the new democratic South Africa (SA) in 1994, the government has attempted to improve basic services, but housing, electricity, water and sanitation remain challenges to adolescents in the Free State. These contextual risk factors as well as other risk factors (such as unemployment, poverty and social security, HIV/AIDS and crime) faced by young people will be presented. Additionally, some of the problems faced in the implementation of youth development programmes will be detailed. Thereafter, community support structures in terms of welfare organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), schools, church activities, sport programmes and facilities, etc. which serve as protective factors that offer young people a sense of hope will be discussed. However, before we review the risks and resources we provide a brief description of the culture of Sotho young people, as part of the contextualization of our study.

This report focuses specifically on the town of Bethlehem and the QwaQwa area which are located in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality (DM) in the Free State. The Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality is made up of five local municipalities (LM), each composed of a number of towns. QwaQwa and Bethlehem form part of the local municipalities of Maluti-a-Phofung and Dihlabeng, respectively. The Maluti-a-Phofung LM has a population of 360 787 and the Dihlabeng LM has a population of 128 929 (Statistics South Africa, 2007). The Black people in this area mostly speak Sesotho and for this reason we provide a brief description of the Sotho culture below.

The Culture of Sotho People

Although we offer a brief description of Sotho culture below, we acknowledge that culture is a fluid phenomenon (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010) and so caution that the description below should not be interpreted as absolute for all Sesotho-speaking people, across space and/or time.

Personality of Sotho People

In a study conducted by Kruger (2006) in QwaQwa in the Free State province on personality and Sotho -speaking people it was found that in general Sotho people are relationship and family oriented people who can be regarded as socially open and expressive or even rowdy as suggested by Pretorius, Louwrens, and Motshegoa (2004 as cited in Kruger, 2004). Sotho – speaking people have a strong sense of community collectiveness and are willing to become involved in the emotional wellbeing and welfare of others (Kruger, 2006). Kruger (2006) found that amongst Sotho people much emphasis is placed on respecting others, especially one’s elders. This is in line with the traditional beliefs held by Sotho-speaking people as respect for lineage seniors, for elders and for males is seen as an essential value (Zaverdinos, 1997). However, Kruger (2006) also found some indication of a transition toward more Western characteristics such as independence and introversion.

Traditional Religious Beliefs

In terms of religion, some traditional Sotho-speaking people believe in the existence of a God (Modimo), but that this God does not make any contact with them or engage himself in their lives (Nürnberg, 1975). Instead they are in contact with ancestral spirits through rituals and practices exercised by family members (Nürnberg, 1975). It is believed that ancestral spirits (which are the spirits of Sotho men who have passed on in the family) have the power to either bless or cause immense trouble for families depending on their recognition and acknowledgment of the spirit as superior (Nürnberg, 1975). Illness and drought, for example, are believed to be caused by spirits (Nürnberg, 1975). Another important Sotho belief is that of the “life-force” of the kinship system (Nürnberg, 1975). Within the kinship system, “a father represents a living link in the continuity of lineage between those before and those after him” (Nürnberg, 1975, p. 177). Therefore, the death of the father presents a major disruption not only for the family unit in terms of readjustment of social relationships but also in terms of the “continuity of the life-stream of lineage” (Nürnberg, 1975, p. 177) which is of paramount importance for those that will follow. For this reason, elaborate rituals are carried out by family members.

Christianity

Today there are many Sotho-speaking people who adhere to Christian faith (Renner, Peltzer, & Phaswana, 2003). According to Nürnberg (1975) the transition to Christianity for Sotho people was not excessively difficult because Christianity offers a relationship with a God that interacts with people and with whom people can interact. Nürnberg (1975) contends that because of the

similarity in the dual roles played by ancestral spirits in the lives of Sotho people, the concept of Jesus Christ as both man and God was not difficult for them to understand. However, according to Nürnberger (1975), changes in society over time have brought about a variety of religious beliefs amongst the Sothos and each hold different meanings. For example, there are those who have reverted to their traditional beliefs in total rejection of Christianity (Nürnberger, 1975); those who hold dual traditional and Christian beliefs, usually practicing their traditional beliefs in secret (Nürnberger, 1975; Thlagale, 2006); those who attend indigenous churches (e.g. Zionist churches) that satisfy both religious needs (Nürnberger, 1975); and finally those who have adopted the Christian way of life as demonstrated by the European missionaries (Nürnberger, 1975). Interestingly, among those who have dual traditional and Christian beliefs, it is believed that Jesus Christ was sent by Modimo (the Supreme Being). Religious Sotho people typically prioritize religious values (such as prayer and forgiveness) and communalist values (such as cooperation, hospitality, harmony and mutual aid) (Renner et al., 2003).

In two recent and separate studies of resilient Black street youth living in and around Bethlehem, Malindi and Theron (2010) and Malindi and Theron (2011) reported strong religious faith and regular participation in religious activity (like church attendance) as pathways to resilience for these Sesotho-speaking youth. These youths' accounts of their resilience were well aligned with the above religious facet of Sotho culture.

Rituals

Rituals are an important part of a cultural group as it is believed that through rituals the deepest values of a group are revealed (Wilson, 1954). The practice of rituals is not uncommon even amongst some converted Christians Sotho-speaking people. Dreams, for example, are still seen as a form of communication from ancestors by which commands or instructions are made known. Rituals that are still practiced by traditional Black people today include: rituals for protection and strength against hostile/evil forces; protection against misfortune; rituals performed after a miscarriage, an abnormal birth or a period of mourning; "doctoring" rituals that treat illness and disease; rites of passage which involve animal slaughter; initiation rituals; and even ritual murders in which organs such as the heart or sexual organs are used for medicinal purposes to strengthen the person to whom it is given (Thlagale, 2006). Thlagale (2006) refers to indigenous people, like the Sothos, as a "cure seeking" people which explains why they are so inclined toward traditional healing methods/rituals. However, if Christianity, on the other hand, is to meet the healing needs of indigenous churches, Thlagale (2006) believes that there needs to be a revival in the teaching and practice of its healing ministry.

In the Sotho culture it is believed that initiation ceremonies hold much significance for young boys and girls as they are initiated into adulthood through the practice of rituals. The reason that initiation rituals are considered to be

significant is because the period between childhood and adulthood is believed to be dangerous for young people and the community as they may be exposed to evil forces (Turner, 1977). In addition, Sothos believe that it is only adults who marry, have children and bear responsibility and only adults who become ancestors which thereby warrant the need for initiation ceremonies (Hammond-Tooke, 1974). However, with the arrival of the missionaries and the traders, farmers and soldiers in the latter half of the 20th century, initiation practices began to decrease in number as they were discouraged by these groups (Zietsman, 1972 as cited in Zaverdinos, 1997). These rituals, however, are still practiced today in some traditional South African Sotho communities. In fact, Coplan (1990) found that these rituals are increasing in number in Lesotho.

Material Culture

With the influence of the Christian missionaries and the Apartheid White government, the material culture of the Sotho people has changed considerably over the years. According to Walton (1950) some of the changes in the material culture of the Sotho people include: housing, dress and music. For example, although traditional huts are still common in rural areas even today, rectangular shaped European dwellings were gaining in popularity from the 20th century (Walton, 1950). Traditional skin clothing had already become a rare sight by the turn of the 20th century as grass clothing instead was more popularly worn by Sothos (Zaverdinos, 1997). Today, however, the European dress seems to be the norm. Changes have also taken place in terms of crafts. For example, woodwork had diminished, along with work in skins. However, grasswork such as the weaving of grass into hats, baskets, mats, amongst other items are still popular. In terms of music, Walton (1950) noticed that traditional songs that were sung when working on tasks (such as hoeing, preparing skins and threshing) were not known to young Sothos. They no longer sang the “old songs” that reflected village-based experience (Wells, 1996). Instead their musical expression was influenced by other social experiences from which other styles of songs arose (Wells, 1996). For example, in the 20th century Sotho music strongly reflected the experiences of migrant workers as they worked in the mines of Johannesburg and Kimberly. Foreign influence, such the European musical influence of hymns and the Afrikaans boere-musiek also contributed to their change in song style (Wells, 1996). Hence music gave voice to the experiences and modern identities of the Sotho people. According to Wells (1996) through music one can ascertain the values and aspirations of people who belong to a social group. This makes music an important aspect of cultural identity.

Africentric Values and Practices

From a traditional African cultural perspective, the concept of ubuntu, which “emphasizes a spirit of communalism among members of a community” (Lesejane, 2006, p. 174) offers young people a greater social support system on which to rely on. Ubuntu “is characterized by caring and compassion for others, especially the most vulnerable; connectedness and ongoing fellowship with the ancestors; and commitment to the common good” (Lesejane, 2006, p. 174). Thus

Ubuntu is a way of life which values the communal context as opposed to the individual context (Venter, 2004). In other words, the community is placed as first in a person's life and therefore one person's problems is not his or her own but is a community problem (Venter, 2004). "The most important difference in the conception of human beings between Eurocentric and Afrocentric philosophical models is that the African viewpoint espouses harmony and collectivity, whilst the Eurocentric point of view emphasizes a more individualistic orientation to life. The Afrocentric viewpoint is more holistic in nature and they see people from a collective perspective" (Schiele, 1994 as cited in Venter, 2004, p. 152). This interconnectedness of family and community support systems and their shared values and practices can alleviate the effects of risk and build resilience (Veeran & Morgan, 2009).

In traditional African culture, patriarchal and kinship laws were valued and maintained. Much emphasis was placed on the respected father, and on the patriarchal role. The father was a figure of moral authority, but simultaneously obedient to the family customs and laws. He provided for his family, and made himself available to his family by spending time with his children and was a leader and role model (Lesejane, 2006). Employed or not the father had the responsibility of providing for his family and even when families faced difficult circumstances, hardship and perseverance served as a medium through which, and from which, resilience was nurtured (Veeran & Morgan, 2009). However, the concept of family and culture in the South African context has undergone considerable change in the last century due to colonization, urbanization, HIV&AIDS, and forced migrant labour. In addition, collective fatherhood was valued and children were often raised by their elders and considered them their collective fathers. Mkhize (2006) referred to this a 'family community'. Sadly, socio-economic and social influences are undermining these values (as discussed later under contextual risks).

Although there is limited available information that pertains specifically to the Sotho culture and its influence on resilience, one study (Cook, 2006) has attempted to bring a better understanding of Sotho culture and its traditions in an effort to strengthen the resilience of children placed at risk by the HIV&AIDS pandemic. The study was conducted in the Free State province in the Batlokwa communities which are areas that are traditionally ruled by Sotho tribal governance (Cook, 2006). The following issues were raised by children as risks embedded in cultural practices:

- "Intolerance of Elders to discussing safe sex and HIV/AIDS;
- Perceived negative community attitudes towards youth;
- Dangerous practices in initiation ceremonies ('mountain schools');
- Few opportunities for meeting with Elders to discuss culture and healthy development; and
- Politicization of culture" (Cook, 2006, p. 73).

However, Sotho children also noted that the cultural beliefs and values offered protective resources that strengthened a healthy response to this risk. These included:

- “Cultural practices offering a sense of identity and pride that can protect them from HIV/AIDS;
- Culture teaches safe sex;
- Cultural practices can be a ‘lifeline’ for isolated and orphaned children; and
- Spiritual connections with the ancestors reinforce families and communities under stress” (Cook, 2006, p. 73).

Traditional healers also gave useful insight into issues that related to vulnerability of children and youth (Cook, 2006). These included: the diminished authority of elders due to the promotion of children’s rights resulting in undisciplined children; an increase in fatherless homes and an increase in female-headed households, where the chief/s of the tribe are not asked for assistance with children resulting in more undisciplined children, more street-children and more children engaging in crime-related activities; the failure of Government to take into account the tribal structure and ways of managing issues such as HIV/AIDS; and the lack of traditional instruction in initiation ceremonies as initiation ceremonies are no longer being led by traditional leaders (Cook, 2006).

Similarly, in more recent studies with resilient Black youth, including Sesotho speaking youth, cultural values have been associated with youth resilience. For example, orphaned youth in a large township reported that peers and friends were unselfish and shared their resources (e.g. food, clothes, toys) and this enabled a better self-concept and opportunities to pass time meaningfully (Theron et al., 2011). This unselfish sharing was linked to traditional Ubuntu values: because people in this community believed that people were deserving of respect, they treated one another with respect and this encouraged self-efficacy and provided opportunities to participate meaningfully in a peer group, even when adolescents were orphaned (Theron, Cameron, Lau, Didkowsky, & Mabitsela, 2009).

Theron (forthcoming) reports that the culturally embedded value systems of Black adolescents (including Sesotho speaking adolescents) encouraged them not to blame themselves for what had gone wrong in their lives and to accept and endure these. For example, studies of resilience among Black street youth (Theron & Malindi, 2010) and among Black female youth who had been sexually abused (Phasha, 2010) suggested that these young people could accept and/or tolerate their life experiences without bearing grudges, against others or themselves. For the street youth, this could be aligned with the steeling effects (Rutter, 2006) of traditional rites (like traditional circumcision) and cultural pride following the turn in South Africa’s political tide in 1994 (Theron & Malindi, 2010). For the abused girls it was associated with Ubuntu values (Phasha, 2010).

Contextual Risk Factors

The table below presents an overall description of the list of basic services that Government is trying to improve by the 2014 target.

Table 2: Minimum standard for each basic service, source vision 2014

Sector	Minimum standard 2014 target
Water	All households to have access to at least clean piped water located at least within 200 m from the household.
Sanitation	All households to have access to at least a ventilated pit
Electricity	All households to be connected to the national grid.
Refuse removal	All households to have access to at least once-a-week refuse removal systems.
Housing	All existing informal settlements to be formalized with land-use plans for economic and social facilities and with provision of permanent basic services.
Other (education, health roads, transport, sport and recreation, street trading, parks, community halls, etc.)	Standards for access for all other social, government and economic services must be clearly defined, planned and where possible implemented by each sector working together with municipalities in the development and implementation of IDPs.

Source: Local Government Turnaround Strategy (2009) as cited in Statistics South Africa (2010, p. 33).

In order to determine whether or not Government is in fact meeting the above minimum standards for basic services it is important to examine the latest available data (Statistics South Africa, 2010). The 2008 data (Statistics South Africa, 2010) shows that municipalities are making basic services available to more households, particularly those who were previously disadvantaged. A detailed description of each basic service is given below.

Housing

The majority (71%) of the Free State province live in formal dwellings (Statistics South Africa, 2007). The percentage of informal dwellings had decreased from 26.1% in 2001 to 18.4% in 2007 (Statistics South Africa, 2007). The proportion of people living in informal dwellings in the Maluti-a-Phofung LM, in particular, has decreased from 13.2% in 2001 to 7.9% in 2007. Similarly, a decrease in the percentage of informal dwellings has also been shown in the Dihlabeng LM from 24.5% in 2001 to 11.5% in 2007 (Statistics South Africa, 2007). However, although government has allocated many housing subsidies the housing backlog stills remains a major challenge to the province and to young people at large (Department of Social Development, 2005).

Electricity

Only 54.6% of households in the Free State have access to the basic commodity of electricity (Statistics South Africa, 2007). In the Dihlabeng LM specifically, electricity is used by 85.5% of households for lighting, 70.1% for cooking and 51% for heating (Statistics South Africa, 2007). Similarly, in the Maluti-a-Phofung LM 78.9% of households use electricity for lighting purposes, followed by 66.7% for cooking and 41.9% for heating (Statistics South Africa, 2007). However, between 2007 and 2008 the province as a whole showed the highest number of households who benefited from the free electricity policy in comparison to the other provinces.

Water

The majority of households in the Dihlabeng and Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipalities (93.7% and 98.8%, respectively) have access to piped water in some form or the other (i.e. piped water in their dwelling, piped water in the yard, piped water from access point outside the dwelling) (Statistics South Africa, 2007). However, in the Dihlabeng and Maluti-a-Phofung local Municipalities only 58.8% and 44.5%, respectively of residents have access to piped water in their dwelling (Statistics South Africa, 2007). Between 2007 and 2008, the province as a whole showed a 5.4% increase in free basic water services to households, although this was the second lowest percentage increase in relation to the other provinces across the country (Statistics South Africa, 2010).

Sanitation

In terms of sanitation, it was found that 71% of households in the Thabo Mofutsanyana DM have access to sanitation in some form or the other (flush toilet -connected to sewerage system, flush toilet -with septic tank, chemical toilet, pit latrine with ventilation (VIP), and pit latrine without ventilation) (South African National Roads Agency, 2007). However, some people in this district still use the bucket system (12.7%) while 3% have no access to sanitation at all (Statistics South Africa, 2007).

Unemployment

Unemployment has increased from approximately 30% in 1996 to approximately 38% in 2002 and is attributed to the substantial loss of employment opportunities in the Mining sector (Department of Social Development, 2005). "It is also important to note that the level of employment is measured at the place of employment and not at the origin of employment (Department of Social Development, 2005, p. 84)." In other words, migrant workers may account for many of the employees working in the Free State mines, for example, when in fact they may be from other provinces. This implies that the number of people from the Free State that are employed is actually lower than the official statistics communicated (Department of Social Development, 2005). Research has also found that many young people are leaving the Free State because they are unable to find job opportunities in the Free State and have to search elsewhere (FSYC, 2004a). Mehlomakulu, Mogoera and Lenka (n.d.) state that this may be a

possible reason why young people are leaving the Maluti-a-Phofung LM as only 22.6% of youth are employed in Maluti-a-Phofung LM compared to 33.7% of employed youth in the province as a whole (33.7%).

The Free State Youth Commission (FSYC) (2004a) found that although unemployed youth remain hopeful about finding employment, many are challenged by their lack of employment skills and qualifications. This is particularly evident amongst African youth as almost 50% of African youth have not completed their secondary school training (FSYC, 2004a). This explains why they occupy the highest number of elementary positions (especially female African youths), in the province. The sad reality is that these findings do not contribute “to endeavours to increase the quality of life and enhance sustainable human development” (FSYC, 2004a, p. 60).

Poverty and Social Security

Social protection and social welfare services are basic rights of all South Africans and are ensured by the National Department of Social Development (Department of Social Development, 2009). The department is also “responsible for developing and monitoring the implementation of social policy that both creates an enabling environment for, and leads to the reduction in, poverty” (Department of Social Development, 2005, p. 85). The majority of the service delivery, however, lies with provincial departments. Between 1997 and 2010 the number of beneficiaries for the income support in the Free State has increased drastically from 0.3 million to 0.8 million (Statistics South Africa, 2010). Most of the welfare budget of the Free State is spent on social security expenditure with many children being assisted with a Child Support Grant (CSG) of R250 per child per month (Department of Social Development, 2005; 2009). From 2010 the age qualification for the CSG has been extended from 15 years to 18 years of age (Cabinet, 2009). One of the Department of Social Development’s initiatives in response to poverty is the qualifying of persons in need of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant. This grant is allocated to those in dire situations and provides temporary assistance (up to 3 months and in some cases 6 months) to persons or households to meet their basic needs (Department of Social Development, 2009).

HIV/AIDS

The youth have been known to be the most widely affected age group to the HIV/AIDS disease. In the Free State province, HIV prevalence among young people aged 15-24 years has decreased substantially from 10.3% in 2005 to 3.8% in 2008 (Shisana et al., 2009). However, Shisana et al. (2009) found that there has been no delay in the age of sexual initiation amongst young people (between 15 and 24 years) in the Free State. In fact, the findings revealed that there has been an increase in the percentage of young people between 2005 (7.8%) and 2008 (9.6%) having their first sexual experience at less than 15 years of age (Shisana et al., 2009). Similar findings were reported by Coetzee (2005) amongst adolescents aged 14 to 19 years in the Bethlehem and QwaQwa areas (amongst others).

Coetzee (2005) found that of those who did indicate the age at which they had their first sexual encounter as many as 54% were below the age of 15 years. This is a particularly alarming finding considering that early sexual debut is known to be one of the contributing factors to the vulnerability of young people to HIV/AIDS.

Driskill and DelCampo (1992) argue that a lack of sex education among adolescents may be related to major adolescent problems including teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and sexual abuse. Findings show that only 43.5% of males and 40.6% of females in South Africa were knowledgeable on HIV/AIDS prevention (Shisana et al., 2009). Similarly, studies conducted by Seekoe (2005) and Coetzee (2005) found that young people in the Free State province were inadequately knowledgeable on HIV/AIDS to be able to prevent the disease as well as teenage pregnancies. Coetzee (2005) found that while the majority of young people (59%) were knowledgeable that condoms can prevent HIV infection, focus group interviews revealed that many fail to use them. According to Van Dyk (2001) this failure to make use of condoms may relate to deep-rooted cultural beliefs.

Research indicates that peer influence and socioeconomic influences are related to risky sexual behaviour. MacPhail and Campbell (2001), for example, found that amongst males there is a strong disapproval for the use of condoms which leads to increased levels of unsafe sexual activity. Drugs and alcohol, which often involve peers in social gatherings, are other factors that are associated with risky sexual behaviour (Morojele, Brook, & Kachieng'a, 2006). Socioeconomic factors such as poverty also play a large role in understanding the sexuality of adolescents in many contexts in South Africa. Brook et al. (2006) found evidence to suggest an association between poverty and risky sexual behaviour amongst adolescents. This is partly because poverty has been associated with a weak parent-child relationship making adolescents likely to develop what is referred to as vulnerable personality and behavioural attributes (Brook et al., 2006). These adolescents are in turn more likely to associate with deviant peers, thereby increasing their risk to unsafe sexual behaviour.

Crime

In terms of crime, many young people support the view that crime levels have increased and that police are ineffective in their attempt to deal with crime (FSYC, 2004a). Many young people are themselves involved in crime-related activities often landing themselves in prison which robs them of their youth. However, NGO's such as NICRO have taken the initiative to implement youth development programmes that focus on crime prevention and development (NICRO, n.d.). These programmes help to direct young offenders away from criminal activity (NICRO, n.d.). NICRO is active in both the Bethlehem and QwaQwa areas.

Education

Some schools and hostels in the province, for example the Thabo Mofutsanyana district are being underutilized as a result of people moving to other areas in search of employment opportunities (Department of Social Development, 2005). As a result, other areas such as the Northern Free State are conversely becoming overcrowded due to the influx of people (Department of Social Development, 2005). In 2005, it was found that schooling in the province frequently took place in unsafe structures located at farm schools, many without access to water, sanitation or electricity (Department of Social Development, 2005), several of which are termed non-viable and without signed agreements (Department of Social Development, 2005). Furthermore, approximately 25% of teachers in the Free State are under qualified (i.e. have less than a senior certificate and a three-year teaching qualification) when compared to the average for SA of 22% (Department of Social Development, 2005). However, it should be stated that this figure has declined from 42% in 1994 (Department of Social Development, 2005).

The statistics indicate that between 1996 and 2001, the number of matriculants between the ages of 20 and 27 has increased from one in every five, to one in every three youths (Department of Social Development, 2005). The Maluti-a-Phofung LM, specifically, has shown a steady increase in the percentage of matriculants (5.6%) which is even higher than the percentage increase of Free State as a whole (5.1%) (Mehlomakulu et al., n.d.). However, the statistics indicate that the percentage of youth in the Maluti-a-Phofung LM without any form of education has grown from 4.6% in 1996 to 6.7% in 2001 compared to the Free State average of 6.0% (Mehlomakulu et al., n.d.). Black youths in particular have shown to have far lower levels of qualifications when compared to youth of other racial groups in the Free State (Department of Social Development, 2005). One of the hindrances to the completion of schooling among young Black girls relates to teenage pregnancies and the burden of early motherhood (FSYC, 2004a). This in turn worsens their socio-economic situation which denies them a better quality of life (FSYC, 2004a).

Motala (2011) notes that despite South Africa's success in prioritising universal access to basic education for its children, many children are silently excluded. By this, she is emphasizing that there is more to education than physical access and that although many South African learners are physically present in classrooms, they learn very little. In many cases, South African learners progress slowly. Nevertheless, because of South Africa's policy of age-grade progression, these learners are promoted until the exit year (Grade 9; typically around the age of 15, although many Grade 9 learners are older because it is common for children from disadvantaged communities to commence schooling later than the mandate: schooling should commence in the year a child turns seven). Because they were silently excluded, they drop out at the end of Grade 9 with practically no marketable skill or viable way forward. Her argument highlights the sorry state of education in many South African schools, more particularly those in

disadvantaged, Black communities. This is despite the post 1994 government's attention to the need for quality education in a country that has a history of heinous education inequality.

A further risk is that curricula do not place enough emphasis on culture and indigenous knowledge as a resource. There is a need to place more emphasis on traditional beliefs, and customs within the school setting so children begin to appreciate their culture and use it as a resource has been acknowledged (Venter, 2004). It has been stated by Higgs and Van Niekerk (2002) that "if teachers in an African context, could start with the indigenous knowledge systems which provide the framework for the learners' initial experiences, then learners would be encouraged to draw on their cultural practices and daily experiences as they negotiate new situations (p. 42).

The Lack of a Father Figure

In South Africa, many children grow up in fatherless homes. However, father absence appears to be more prevalent among Black Africans as compared to other racial groups. For example, "in 2002, fewer than 40% of Black children ages 15 years or younger lived with their fathers, compared to almost 90% of white and Indian children" (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010, p. 361).

There are many reasons why Black African fathers are not involved in the lives of their children, including the effects of migration (due to colonization and Apartheid): when Black men migrated to the city to work in the mines, they separated from their families and mostly returned home only once a year to visit (Richter et al., 2010). Financial status also affects paternal involvement in children's lives as many men feel ashamed if they are unable to provide for their families and hence choose to be absent from the children. Furthermore, many men are financially not able to pay lobola (bride wealth) and so do not get married to the mother(s) of their children, thereby disrupting access to these children. The effects of Apartheid laws, and the periods of unrest and violence in the history of South Africa, further disturbed father-child contact when children were sent to rural areas for safety reasons, or to urban areas to find a better education (Richter et al., 2010).

Growing up without a father may be considered a risk factor for children and adolescents as research reports that the absence of a father can evoke a sense of loss and confusion for children (Ramphela, 2002). Without a father present in the home, or without contact with their father, children and adolescents may be more likely to grow up without father-figure role-models and without the examples of appropriate behaviours that they can model. Typically then, they will be denied the formation of an archetypal relationship (father and child relationship) and lose out on the love and security that is generally fostered through such a relationship (Richter et al., 2010). Furthermore, this means that many boys are growing up without an understanding of fatherhood and

manhood from a cultural perspective (Mkhize, 2004). They are also denied the opportunity to observe healthy interaction between a mother and a father within the family unit and thus do not see, for example, how violence against women, was traditionally considered a cowardly act which resulted in social exclusion. This kind of self-restraint is not being modeled to young males and so instead, many young men now opt to assert their masculinity by resorting to violence and gangster heroism (Mkhize, 2004).

In summary, nowadays children are often growing up without father-figure role-models and without strong family ties and support systems. “Whereas in the past a child could not be fatherless or parentless, the erosion of the traditional African family and community systems has effectively spawned a generation of ‘parentless’ children -children who are social outcasts with little prospect of meaningful development.” (Lesejane, 2006, p. 179).

Problems with the Implementation of Youth Development Programmes

A review of government documents has revealed that there is an apparent lack of effective collaboration between government departments and local municipalities with regard to the implementation of youth development programmes (Department of Social Development, 2005; Multi-A-Phofung Local Municipality, 2005). Although most local municipalities (approximately 60%) work with the departments, they are also of the view that the departments are responsible for youth development (FSYC, 2004a). And while many departments have launched youth development programmes, the majority of local municipalities “do not have programmes that are off the ground” (Department of Social Development, 2005, p. 101). In other words, there is a problem with service delivery. Furthermore, problems have been reported within youth units that have been within departments and municipalities as youth development programmes are not reported to the Special Programme Officers (SPOs) (who are the legitimate parties to report on youth development within that department) (Department of Social Development, 2005). Consequently these youth development programmes although implemented by the departments, are not reported to the Interdepartmental Committee on Youth Affairs (IDCYA) by the SPOs which leaves the IDCYA under the impression that no programmes have been implemented within that department (Department of Social Development, 2005). Thus, although programmes are implemented, the process of implementation is not in accordance with the principles of effective youth development practice (Department of Social Development, 2005).

Another problem that has been identified relates to the lack of specific allocation of funds made to the implementation of programmes. According to the Department of Social Development (2005), only 30% of municipalities had made budget allocations to the implementation of youth development programmes and approximately 60% of departments make use of a departmental capital budget to implement youth programmes.

Lastly, the insufficient knowledge of some officials on National Youth Policy, for example, leaves them unable to use these policies to inform practice within their respective departments. Local and district municipalities have also reported a shortage of staff to focus on youth development programmes (Department of Social Development, 2005; FSYC, 2004a).

Protective Resources

Although there are many contextual issues and other risk factors facing young people in the Free State province, it must be mentioned that there are many structures and programmes that are in place that contribute toward youth development (refer to Table 2 and 3). Various community support structures in terms of welfare organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBO) etc. have also been identified that serve as protective factors for young people in the Free State province. This section also provides an overview of extended family support, school support, women’s groups and church-based support and social development through sports programmes.

Youth Development Projects

Table 3 lists projects that have been documented in the literature as initiatives towards youth development made by various government departments and district municipalities (DM) or local municipalities (LM).

Table 3: Youth development projects already implemented (unless otherwise indicated) by departments and/or municipalities

Department and/or Municipality	Town	Type of youth project	Potential benefits
1. Arts, Culture and Heritage directorate ^{a, b}	QwaQwa	Educational programme	Cultural awareness, indigenous knowledge
2. Library, Archives and Technology ^{a, b}	QwaQwa	Children’s and Parents library	Knowledge development
3. Library, Archives and Technology ^{a, b}	QwaQwa	6 School-community libraries with a computer	Computer literacy skills
4. Department of Sport and Recreation; Maluti-a-Phofung LM ^b	QwaQwa	Sports development	None: Unutilized funds (R500 000)
5. Department of Social Development ^b	QwaQwa	Groundbreakers	Leadership development, motivation, conflict management
6. Department of Social Development; Department of Education ^b	QwaQwa	Addicted to life clubs	Raise awareness on substance abuse
7. Maluti-a-Phofung LM; FSYC ^b	QwaQwa	Literacy project	Promotes literacy
8. Department of Health; Department of Agriculture; Thabo Mofutsanyana DM ^b	QwaQwa	Dithotaneng Combined (vegetable garden)	Skills development

9. Department of Health; Department of Agriculture; Thabo Mofutsanyana DM ^b	Bethlehem	Phele-O-Phedise Gardening Project	Skills development
10. Department of Health; Thabo Mofutsanyana DM ^b	QwaQwa	Phakisa Sewing	Skills development
11. Department of Health; Department of Agriculture; Thabo Mofutsanyana DM ^b	QwaQwa	Tshwara Thebe Combined (vegetable garden)	Skills development
12. Department of Public Works; Roads and Transport; Thabo Mofutsanyana DM ^b	QwaQwa	Renovation of the Itsoseng Centre for disabled children	Skills development, job creation
13. Maluti-A-Phofung LMc (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Proposed Youth Brick-making project	Skills development, Job creation
14. Maluti-A-Phofung LM ^c (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Proposed Youth Piggery Project	Skills development, job creation
15. Maluti-A-Phofung LM; Development Bank of Southern Africa ^c	Not specified	Proposed Leadership Programme of 24 Youth in motor mechanics	Leadership development
16. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Maluti Poultry	Skills development, job creation
17. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	QwaQwa	Sandstone Mining	Skills development, job creation
18. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Maluti Dairy Project	Skills development, job creation
19. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Morena WA Letlalo	Skills development, job creation
20. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Raohelang Bohahlaodi Project	Skills development, job creation
21. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Tswaranag Integrated Waste Management Project	Skills development, job creation
22. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Monontsha Wetland Project	Skills development, job creation
23. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Maluti Cave Route Project	Skills development, job creation
24. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Sentinel Car Park Access Tsheseng	Skills development, job creation
25. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Infrastructure Development Trough Monontsha Pass	Skills development, job creation
26. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Wetsie's Cave Project (Community Tourism and Crafts Project)	Skills development, job creation
27. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Central Communication Centre	Skills development, job creation

28. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Greening Project	Skills development, job creation
29. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Black Water Fly Fishing and Trout	Skills development, job creation
30. Maluti-A-Phofung ^d (planned for implementation)	Not specified	Maluti Thusa Batho Trail	Skills development, job creation

^a Of the Department of Sports, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology

^b Sourced from FSYC (2004b).

^c Sourced from Multi-A-Phofung (2005).

^d Sourced from Multi-A-Phofung (2007).

In 2002, the NGO funding programme was launched by the Department of Health as an initiative to provide support and training to NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS community work (Department of Health, 2005). It is part of a partnership between government, NGOs, CBOs and FBOs in the collaborative effect to fight against HIV/AIDS. The government recognizes the pivotal role of NGOs, CBOs and FBOs in reaching communities at the grass-roots level and thereby sought to provide support and training to these organizations (Department of Health, 2005). According to the Department of Health (2005) the NGO funding project in the Free State is operating adequately. The project has a number of foci, including in and out school youth programmes; rural programmes and outreach; women programmes; and condom education, promotion and distribution. In the QwaQwa and Bethlehem areas specifically, there are three organizations that have focused on youth development in particular as detailed in Table 3 (no. 1-3). The youth development programmes of other organizations of various foci are also listed.

Table 4: Organizations that are implementing youth development programmes

Name of Organization	Town	Potential benefits
1. Sinethemba Youth Development ^a	QwaQwa	Skills development: cooking, sewing, craft making, carpentry and gardening
2. QwaQwa Association of Youth Clubs ^a	QwaQwa	Delinquency prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, drop-out prevention, job programs
3. Eletsanang Youth Awareness Group ^a	Bethlehem	Health promotion, health education
4. Youth in Christ Outreach ^b	Bethlehem	Promoting religious beliefs and administering religious services
5. Bethlehem Child and Family Care Society ^c	Bethlehem	Substance abuse prevention, health promotion, crime prevention, addicted to life clubs, life skills
6. Child and Youth Care Agency for Development (CYCAD) ^d	QwaQwa	Youth development workshop on HIV/AIDS, youth leadership development programme
7. Bolata AIDS Project ^e	QwaQwa	AIDS education, HIV/AIDS support groups for youth, skills development (gardening), home-based

8. Nigol Youth Development Organization ^b	Bethlehem	Delinquency prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, drop-out prevention, job programs
9. Together we can Survive Youth Club ^b	QwaQwa	Delinquency prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, drop-out prevention, job programs
10. Thusanang Advice Centre ^f	QwaQwa	Encouraging young people to end gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and substance abuse
11. Afrikaskop Youth Association ^b	Bethlehem	Health promotion, HIV/AIDS education
12. Lemogang Anti Drug Youth Forum ^b	QwaQwa	Substance abuse prevention
13. Centre for Education Career Information Enterprise and Skills ^{b, g}	QwaQwa	Life skills, business skills and technical training
14. DNT Youth Club ^b	Bethlehem	Youth services and youth welfare
15. Hlohlolwane Youth Academy ^b	Bethlehem	Youth services and youth welfare
16. Sisonke Youth Organization ^h	QwaQwa	Peer education at schools, HIV/AIDS and counselling course
17. The Diversion and Youth Development Programme (NICRO) ⁱ	Bethlehem, QwaQwa	Directing young offenders away from criminal activity
18. The Free State Stars Academy ^j	Bethlehem	Developing young football talent

School Support

^a Department of Health (2005), ^b Free State Department of Social Development (2006), ^c Child and Youth Care Agency for Development (CYCAD) (2002), ^d Child and Family Care Society (2009); Free State Department of Social Development (2006), ^e African Solutions to African Problems (ASAP) (2009); Department of Public Works (2004), ^f Free State Department of Social Development (2006); Sonke Gender Justice Network (2007), ^g Free State Department of Social Development (2006); The Youth Development Network (2003), ^h Department of Public Works (2004); Free State Department of Social Development (2006), ⁱ Nicro (no date); ^j Free State Stars (2011)

Extended Family Support

The role of the extended family and other social networks has been found to be an integral part of the support structure in rural areas such as QwaQwa (Arntz, 2002). According to Arntz (2002) the extended family provides a number of functions including that of monetary assistance, labour assistance and caring for the sick. In some cases orphans are also provided for within the family network. However, findings of a study conducted by Leatham (2005) on experiences of adolescents from child-headed homes in the Free State revealed that the extended family is no longer playing the extensive traditional supportive role as was the case previously (often due to socioeconomic and social risks such as the HIV&AIDS pandemic and concomitant Social Rupture Theories – see for example, Guest, 2003). Instead adolescent learners now look to older sisters and sibling sub-systems as well as friendships for strong social support (Leatham, 2005). The study found that elements of trust and the need to feel valued within one's community were important to them (Leatham, 2005). This is why Leatham (2005) recommended that communities create opportunities for interactions with adults and role model figures so as to contribute toward their sense of belonging within the community and to increase their sense of self-worth.

The role of the school as a protective factor for adolescents has been highlighted. It has been suggested that School Based Support Teams can provide extensive support to adolescent learners of child-headed households, for example (Leatham, 2005). As soon as the death of a parent is discovered the school can step in and support the adolescent by making formal contact with the Department of Social Development and by helping the young person to apply for a possible relief grant (Leatham, 2005). Bereavement counselling is another way in which the school can assist the young person (Leatham, 2005). Home visits can also be made to re-assess the support needs of the family (Leatham, 2005).

In particular, resilient Black youth reported that their schools provided them with opportunities for positive experiences, including experiences of success, and opportunities to obtain life-skills and an education (which in turn offered a pathway to continued mastery and better life prospects (Ebersöhn, 2007, 2008, 2010; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Malindi & Theron, 2011; Phasha, 2010; Theron, 2007; Theron & Malindi, 2010; Theron & Theron, 2010).

Women's Groups and Church-Based Support

Women's groups and church-based support were reported by Arntz (2002) as forms of support mechanisms. However, both forms of support were found to be minimal. Similarly, the use of the services of ATICC and NAPWA as well as Hospice services and support groups were only minimally used (Arntz, 2002). However, the study did mention that there is the possibility that services were not reported because of the stigma attached to the HIV/AIDS disease and that respondents may in fact have utilized services but may not have reported them in fear of their status being made know within the household. Rural communities such QwaQwa have less access to welfare support mechanisms for reasons owing to poor social infrastructural in the form of health facilities, schools and clinics, etc. (Arntz, 2002). In addition, long distances have to be travelled in order to make use of welfare offices (Arntz, 2002).

The Impact of the Youth Advisory Committee in QwaQwa

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is located and run by the Maluti FET College (MFETC) in QwaQwa (Zenjinji Consulting Services, 2007). Findings of an evaluation study on the MFETC revealed that the YAC has made a positive impact in the lives of QwaQwa youth and has contributed towards their self-development (Zenjinji Consulting Services, 2007). It has done so by providing them with information on available services for youth in the area as well as with life skills, such as communication skills, interview skills, computer literacy skills, business development skills, and curriculum vitae compilation skills (Zenjinji Consulting Services, 2007). The evaluation revealed that 37 (94.9%) of the 39 respondents interviewed were very satisfied with the services received which is why this service should be regarded as a protective factor for youth in QwaQwa (Zenjinji Consulting Services, 2007).

Social Development through Sports Programmes

Sports programmes and facilities have the potential to impart life-skills and to add to the social development of young people (Williams & Atkinson, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that engaging youth in sports programmes can benefit them in many areas including: health education, community building, poverty reduction, social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse and juvenile delinquency (Williams & Atkinson, 2009). However, it appears that the youth development projects implemented in QwaQwa and Bethlehem (refer to Tables 1 and 2) have failed to integrate sport in their youth development initiatives. This is despite the fact that the Department of Sport and Recreation contends that it is in collaboration with most municipalities (with the exception of QwaQwa) on issues regarding youth integration (FSYC, 2004b).

In a study conducted by Williams and Atkinson (2009) in a rural area (Philippolis) in the Free State it was found that the sport facilities that did exist were poorly maintained if not completely neglected. Youth practiced soccer on uneven land, covered in stones and sometimes even glass. Williams and Atkinson (2009) state that sport in Philippolis like many other rural areas in South Africa “is no more than an accidental involvement.” (p. 82) This is particularly disturbing when you consider the important role that sport can play in the social development of young people.

One of the participants in William’s and Atkinson’s study made the valid comment that “soccer players are popular amongst youth and can have a good influence on them. We can develop sport -but it is the people that need development through sport” (p. 82). Both government and communities alike need to do more to include this valuable resource in reaching vulnerable youth.

In a small scale qualitative study with male street youth in Bethlehem, Malindi and Theron (2011) reported that soccer was regarded as a protective opportunity. It offered opportunity for relaxation, mastery, and distraction that supported these youth to cope with daily hardships.

CONCLUSION

This report has provided a description of the contextual and other risk factors facing young people in QwaQwa and Bethlehem areas of the Free State in South Africa. Clearly, young people in these areas face immense ecosystemic challenges and require much support from the Government and the community at large to be able to successfully develop and meaningfully contribute to society. We also briefly reviewed protective resources, including issues of cultural values and practices, which potentially buffer young people against the risks described. We emphasize the temporal limitation of the information contained in this report and urge readers to bear in mind that risks and resources are fluid. Nevertheless, the information summarised in this report urges research into potential pathways of resilience for the youth in these areas, given the risk that their ecologies have placed them at.

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