

SA CITIES YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



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The South African Cities Network (SACN) is pleased to share the SA Cities Youth Engagement Toolkit. It is a culmination of work beginning in 2017, a co-creative process targeting youth stakeholders, with the aim of amplifying youth voice, enabling them to participate meaningfully in urban policy, governance and development processes and building their capacity to ultimately shape the cities of the future.

The need for this work and for a toolkit was identified in response to a dire need in the sector and in support of priorities set in the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), namely Lever 7 which speaks to 'empowered, active communities'. Applying a vulnerability and exclusion lens to how we do this work, and recognizing that youth are not homogenous, but have diverse needs and a lot to say and do in contribution to city making, SACN initiated a process, with interventions designed for youth in planning and architecture scholarship and those out-of-school, with no subject area experience. Thus, the Youth and City Space intervention was birthed, a continuous engagement with urban youth, building a growing cohort over time.

Having hosted workshops to demystify urban processes, trainings in participatory research methods for identifying challenges in their communities, essay and design competitions, with the express intent not to be event-based in how we engage with youth and matters that affect them, SACN identified a gap in how institutions conduct youth engagement. Meaningful engagement must be tailored, cognizant of the unique challenges and opportunities within this demographic and positioned to drive the deep participation of youth in urban economy, space and society.

FOREWORD

The toolkit reflects the voices of youth, national and local government officials and key all-of-society stakeholders working to enhance the uncapped potential of Youth to shape our Cities. It gives a practical sense of 'how-to' with regards to convening youth, unpacking challenges, and identifying points of entry for their inclusion in key processes and in reaping the benefit of living in cities. It makes important recommendations as to how local governments particularly can use existing powers and functions to improve youth participation in urban space, economy and society. For example, how city property companies among other modalities, can be positioned to radically drive youth participation in the economy and more.

Although this Toolkit focuses on urban safety and the creative economies this is a resource we hope will inspire application in a number of subject areas. It is envisioned as an incremental or iterative set of practical tools and approaches, to be refined through use cases in various contexts. SACN hopes to continuously find opportunities and partnerships to take it forward as a living resource.

Sincerely,

Sithole Mbanga



The SA Cities Youth Engagement Toolkit was made possible by the commitment of the SACN participating cities. The project is part of a suite of interventions by the SACN, in support of the implementation of the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF).

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CoJ: City of Johannesburg

CBOs: Community Based Organisations

COGTA: Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

CCIs: Cultural and creative industries (CCIs)

CCIDS: Creative Industries Development Strategy

CCIFSA: Cultural and Creative Industry Federation of South Africa

DSBD: Department of Small Business Development

DUT: Durban University of Technology

EPWP: Expanded Public Works Programme

GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

IUDF: Integrated Urban Development Framework

JPC: Johannesburg Property Company

LGBTQIA+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual +

NCOP: National Council of Provinces

NDP: National Development Plan

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations

NPOs: Non-Profit Organisations

NISSP: National Inclusive and Safer Schools Partnership

NMB: Nelson Mandela Bay

NMU: Nelson Mandela University

NRF: National Research Foundation

NYRI: National Youth Resilience Initiative

PFMA: Public Finance Management Act

SACN: South African Cities Network

SAMRO: South African Music Royalty Organization

SEDA: Small Enterprise Development Agency

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

VCP: Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention Programme

UNCTD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNEP: United Nations Environmental Programme

USRG: Urban Safety Reference Group

ABBREVIATIONS

The South African Cities Network (SACN) commissioned Bantu Lab to develop a youth engagement toolkit that encourages youth participation in governance and urban development. The toolkit was developed in collaboration with young people, city officials, and representatives of the private sector and international development cooperation agencies. Its purpose was to gain a better understanding of young people's concerns and development needs in cities, as well as outline their concerns and also identified pathways for inclusion. Two consultation sessions were held with youth. The thematic focus of the eThekweni engagement was then creative economies, while Gqeberha's was on urban safety. To encourage participants to think spatially, creative methodological tools were used to document the lessons from both cities. Defining what youth are and not treating them as homogeneous groups has been a critical part of the toolkit development. This toolkit is also intended for those seeking to foster youth participation in urban development issues and for all youth who are interested in participating in city making processes. During the development of the toolkit, a review of the previous Youth and City Space research project was conducted. The review also incorporated other relevant work by SACN, such as the Visualization Studios and the biennial Young Planners and Designers Essay Competition. In addition, a diagnostic analysis of the youth engagement landscape was carried out.

In addition, a further analysis of the youth engagement landscape was conducted at the national, provincial, and local levels to gain a better understanding of policy and advocacy practices and the role of civil society. An overview of the cultural and

creative industries was presented, focusing on the status quo in the city of eThekweni Municipality, and the country as a whole. The issue of urban safety was also examined in a broad sense in South Africa and in Nelson Mandela Bay. There was also some reflection from city practitioners, which put into perspective the work of municipalities and other government agencies in relation to youth participation.

City practitioners' reflections were recorded and produced as a series of themed podcast episodes. The toolkit concludes with some recommendations on how cities can support young people and encourage meaningful participation in governance and decision-making processes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Cities are places of non-safety where peoples voice aren't heard, but at the same time, are places of opportunities and learning that inspire action towards growth.

figure 2: eThekwini workshop
photo credit: Nondumiso Sibiyi

1. INTRODUCTION

Young people between the ages of 15-35, many of whom live in cities, make up over 35% of South Africa's population. They are key actors and a critical voice in shaping the cities of the future. Furthermore, the Youth accounts for over 46% of the country's total unemployment, a significant proportion of which are graduates. Statistics also show that young people are both the main victims and perpetrators of crime and violence. This data was gathered before Covid-19 befell the globe, and realities for young people have since only grown grimmer. At the same time, young people individually or in organised and semi-organised structures, are actively involved in innovation and solutions to problems in their communities. What they experience in turn, is that intersecting hierarchies exclude them from playing a meaningful role in shaping their own futures. Too often, their ideas and contributions fall on deaf ears.

It is not enough that the potential of youth is recognized and acknowledged. Young people must be empowered with the knowledge and skills that unlock their full potentials and enable them to fully participate in and be contributors to the growth of their cities and society at large. Platforms must be provided where the voices of youth are heard and influence decision-making. Young people must be meaningfully included in governance and technical processes. As co-creators, they should have a role in the entirety of the development process: from knowledge generation, conceptualisation through to the implementation and assessment of outcomes.

Therefore, because cities are deemed the best chance of achieving sustainable development and more equal societies; youth should be central actors. Including young people, even if they do not have technical qualifications, is not an option but a necessity if democracy and integrated development are to have meaningful value (Argo et al.,

2016; Omar et al., 2016). It is essential then that young people are included in key processes within formal institutions. This is not only because they are a marginalised but rapidly growing proportion of the population on the African Continent, but also in recognition of the fact that they are to inherit the quest for inclusive growth and sustainable development - the future leaders, innovators, and peace-builders.

Urban development is often seen as reserved for highly skilled and experienced professionals, and so the challenge is how to bring young people to the table in a highly complex and technical industry (SACN, 2022). City officials and practitioners such as planners, designers, architects, technical experts, consultants, and policy makers have a critical role to play in responding to the myriad of challenges facing cities. However significant shifts are happening in these sectors that call for collaboration, partnership, and co-creation with all of society. The South African Cities Network (SACN) was established in 2002 as a network of South African cities and partners that encourages the exchange of information, experience and best practice on urban development and city management. Working together with South African cities and partners through research, knowledge sharing, peer learning and innovation, the SACN is at the forefront of efforts to achieve the urban futures vision outlined in the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) and the National Development Plan [NDP].

SACN's research and interventions focused on amplifying youth voice show that young people battle to find the right channels through which to report issues and proffer ideas. They often don't know who their community leaders are, how to access them and whether they care about their lives and the issues that affect them. Youth also have strong opinions. Municipal structures must engage with them directly, as partners/ collaborators, to be more effective when planning and implementing programmes targeting them.

This toolkit seeks to consolidate the work of the SACN so far and offers tools and approaches to help cities harness the value of youth as collaborators in city making. The toolkit outlines a set of practical and creative engagement approaches for government agencies and officials both at the municipal level and across spheres of government. For youth, the toolkit builds on efforts of enabling local leadership and building capacity to navigate complex institutions knowledgeably undertaken through other processes. The toolkit foregrounds perspectives on innovative governance mechanisms that can be aligned to positively impact the future for young people in respective cities, thereby ensuring that socio-economic needs and opportunities are harnessed.



2. WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

The SACN has developed this toolkit for cities, city practitioners and any other government or non-government agencies with a role, to help foster youth participation in urban governance and development matters. The toolkit also sets out to give a practical sense of how to convene and engage young people effectively. A significant amount of research has been undertaken by the SACN through the Youth and City Space project and Visualisation Studios processes, which all crystallise the challenges relating to participation and urban governance. These challenges and outcomes are summarised in the section below, as part of the process to understand what initiatives have been undertaken and how this toolkit can start to fill those gaps in.

This toolkit is for everyone who seeks to foster youth participation in urban development and all youth who wish to participate meaningfully in urban life. You may be a city official, a development worker, working in the public sector or a young person in the creative sector, community development, business, or someone interested in being involved in an active way in their communities.

The toolkit is for those interested in:

- Understanding the concerns and developmental needs of young people in cities
- Building experience in implementing youth participation
- Cases of good practice on youth engagement
- Developing an understanding of how cities, municipalities and government work
- Accessing resources and information about opportunities available to youth to participate in decision-making or income generating opportunities

This toolkit is for everyone who seeks to foster youth participation in urban development and all youth who want to participate in processes that impact their lives.

3. HOW WAS THIS TOOLKIT DEVELOPED?

The project began with a review of existing resources that the South African Cities Network (SACN) has produced through the organisation's engagement with youth in cities. A review was conducted of the Youth and City Space Report, Visualization Studios and Digital Dash Publication. The review process was a desktop research exercise, which included a diagnostic component with participant interviews, to inform the design of in-person consultative sessions with youth in select cities.

Phase 1: A review of Previous Youth & The City Research

The project began with a diagnostic of the existing resources that the South African Cities Network (SACN) has produced through the organisation's engagement with youth in cities. The diagnostic was conducted using the Youth & City Space Report, Visualisations Studios and Digital Dash Report containing top entries from the Young Planners and Designers Essay Competition. It also drew perspectives from some partners of the SACN such as YouthLab, the National Youth Resilience Initiative (NYRI), as well as officials from the respective cities. The review process together with the diagnostic analysis outlined in Phase 3 formed the basis of this toolkit.

Phase 2: Youth Engagement Workshops

- The project team curated and facilitated Youth engagement workshops in two South African cities, eThekweni Municipality and Nelson Mandela Bay Metro (Gqeberha). The workshop events were designed as creative working groups and visioning sessions, that aimed to illicit/harvest insights for strengthening existing initiatives, and exploring co-production mechanisms amongst youth in both cities.

- The overall objectives for the city youth engagements were:
- To document youth's experiences of urban safety and the creative economy in Gqeberha and eThekweni respectively
- To empower youth to navigate complex institutions knowledgeably
- To understand the resources and tools youth need to participate in urban development

Phase 3: Reflections from City Practitioners

The final phase of the toolkit development process was a series of diagnostic interviews with city officials and partners from different spheres of government, development cooperation agencies and private business. The interviews were conducted and recorded for the development of 3 podcast episodes around key themes emerging from the interviews.

4. DEFINING YOUTH FOR THE TOOLKIT

The term youth is quite broad and used to describe a wide spectrum of people ranging from age 15 to 35. Given that youth are not a homogenous group, and have different experiences, concerns and interests, this toolkit seeks to differentiate between these different stages of youth.

This toolkit is specifically focused on teenagers and young

“Unfortunately, in this country, violence is the holding cell for a child’s life, and even in our adult life, violence is a holding cell for healthy relationships with self, community, society, law and even intimate partner relations. So, something is happening in children’s childhood experiences that is contributing to a lot of the social ills that we have.” Noxolo Thabatha, GIZ.

adults, aged from 13-35. Engaging with children (younger than 13) was beyond the scope of this toolkit, and this age group of 15-35 encapsulates a critical demographic that are potentially critical stakeholders in development given they’re at the stage of young adulthood and have a more direct stake in decision-making processes and their impact.

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holding cell for healthy relationships with self, community, society, law and even intimate partner relations. So, something is happening in children’s childhood experiences that is contributing to a lot of the social ills that we have.”

Very often, the ideas of youth participation have been focused on youth that are economically active, with a focus

“School environments became the sites for community work to take place. Schools in SA become sites of intervention, community organising and voting stations. There is a beautiful use of school grounds by communities.” Noxolo Thabatha, GIZ.

on how to make opportunities more accessible for them. But this idea neglects the foundation of youth as teenagers, who grow up in different socio-political contexts, and experience violence from a young age. This impacts how they show up in the world as young adults.

“Giving an 18-year old an opportunity will not undo the 18 years of trauma that poverty has imposed on them.” Visualisation studios participant, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2020

Therefore, this toolkit includes the initiatives concerning

The focus of this toolkit is to enable young opportunity seekers and residents, to understand the youth engagement landscape and be better equipped with knowledge on how to harness opportunities available to them.

teenagers, who spend most of their time in schools, which are a critical site of intervention for community development in SA.

“School environments became the sites for community work to take place. Schools in SA become sites of intervention, community organising and voting stations. There is a beautiful use of school grounds by communities.”

South Africa’s development landscape is not purely urban or rural, but areas of transition, decline and rapidly growing settlements also need consideration in terms of thinking about young people, as they come from different contexts and are at different stages in life with differing needs. While the cut off ages for youth either falling within or

outside this age group can result in unnecessary exclusion, it is important to clarify here that this toolkit takes the position that including youth in development issues from the school going age is important to ensure that as young adults, they are empowered to self-determine and make good choices for themselves and their communities.

This toolkit therefore includes school-going teenagers, to youth in further educational and training or higher education institutions, young professionals, entrepreneurs, academics and urban residents between age 13-35.

“Most of the young people are trying to get their lives together. They are trying to get jobs, some of them are working towards accumulating their qualifications and some just started out working. There are some who are trying to develop their ideas and get funding.”

“Giving an 18-year old an opportunity will not undo the 18 years of trauma that poverty has imposed on them.” Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2020



figure 4: eThekweni workshop
photo credit: Nondumiso Sibiyi

5. YOUTH’S VIEWS ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

A significant amount of research has been undertaken by the SACN through the Youth and City Space and Visualization Studios projects, which all clarify the challenges relating to participation and urban governance. The Youth and City Space project mainly draws from Cities in Gauteng while the Visualisation studios was a project that engaged people (including youth) from 7 cities across South Africa. These challenges and outcomes are summarised here and set out gaps that this toolkit seeks to fill.

Based on the experiences and perspectives of young people, cities are places of unsafety and being unheard, but at the same time, are places of opportunities and learning that inspire action towards evolution. There is a need to highlight the historical contexts of development in South Africa and consider cultural identity in decision-making and education to have a more inclusive view of urban development.

“We need free education for poor people like me. Education in townships needs to be equal as it teaches us to work for other people, but we are not taught to be independent.”

Visualisation studios participant, Nelson Mandela Bay

Cities need to be designed in ways that uplift the identities of their people. Cultural identity and historical contexts are not reflected sufficiently in education and decision-making processes. A more holistic and inclusive way of thinking about urban development and inclusive governance is needed.

Additionally, youth need income-generating opportunities and skills development. There is a scarcity of state-driven support mechanisms for youth-led entrepreneurship initiatives. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is not conceived as a long-term employment path and there is a need to empower youth to play a more active role in solving the challenges they experience in their communities.

“They are always claiming to do things for youth when all decisions that concern us have already been made. A lot of people have ideas for the progression of the city [and youth] but they are not for the common good.”

Visualisation studios participant, Mangaung

“We don’t lack ideas. We lack trust. We don’t trust that things will happen. We are not short of ideas. We just need our current ones to work. Everything we are saying can happen, but we don’t trust that it will happen.”

Visualisation studios participant, Nelson Mandela Bay

“In smaller towns when you create activity nodes (beach, sports precinct), you create energy” *Visualisation studios participant, Buffalo City*

The youth want to be more involved in local governance and municipal structures need to engage more directly with young people, outside of public participation cycles. The low participation of youth in voting and public participation is driven by the low levels of trust between government and youth. Practices need to shift towards being more proactive around ensuring inclusion, cultural and language diversity.

“We need an interface of people with solutions and political influence - those are the people who can change the world.” Visualisation Studios participant, eThekweni

“I have yet to see a society where corruption is not a problem. It is a problem, but I don’t think it is sufficient to keep us from doing the things we want to do.” Visualisation studios participant, City of Joburg

“We need to decentralize creative spaces. Centralisation can lead to stagnation. The community needs to run things themselves - not government, not municipality.” Visualisation studios participant, Nelson Mandela Bay

Young people have ideas for how their cities can be better places and are actively making efforts to contribute to the economy through their talents, ideas and skills. But there are not enough spaces to enable this. There is a need identified to give spaces multiple uses outside of working hours and convert underused abandoned buildings to residential, educational and small business uses.

“We need artists to redesign playgrounds - to energise the space. That will be more interesting than merry go rounds.” Visualisation studios participant, City of Tshwane

“We have existing infrastructure that’s worth a lot that is not being used well. We are obsessed with building horizontally and creating new things when we have so many spaces that are not occupied” Visualisation studios participant, Mangaung

6. UNDERSTANDING THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT LANDSCAPE IN SA

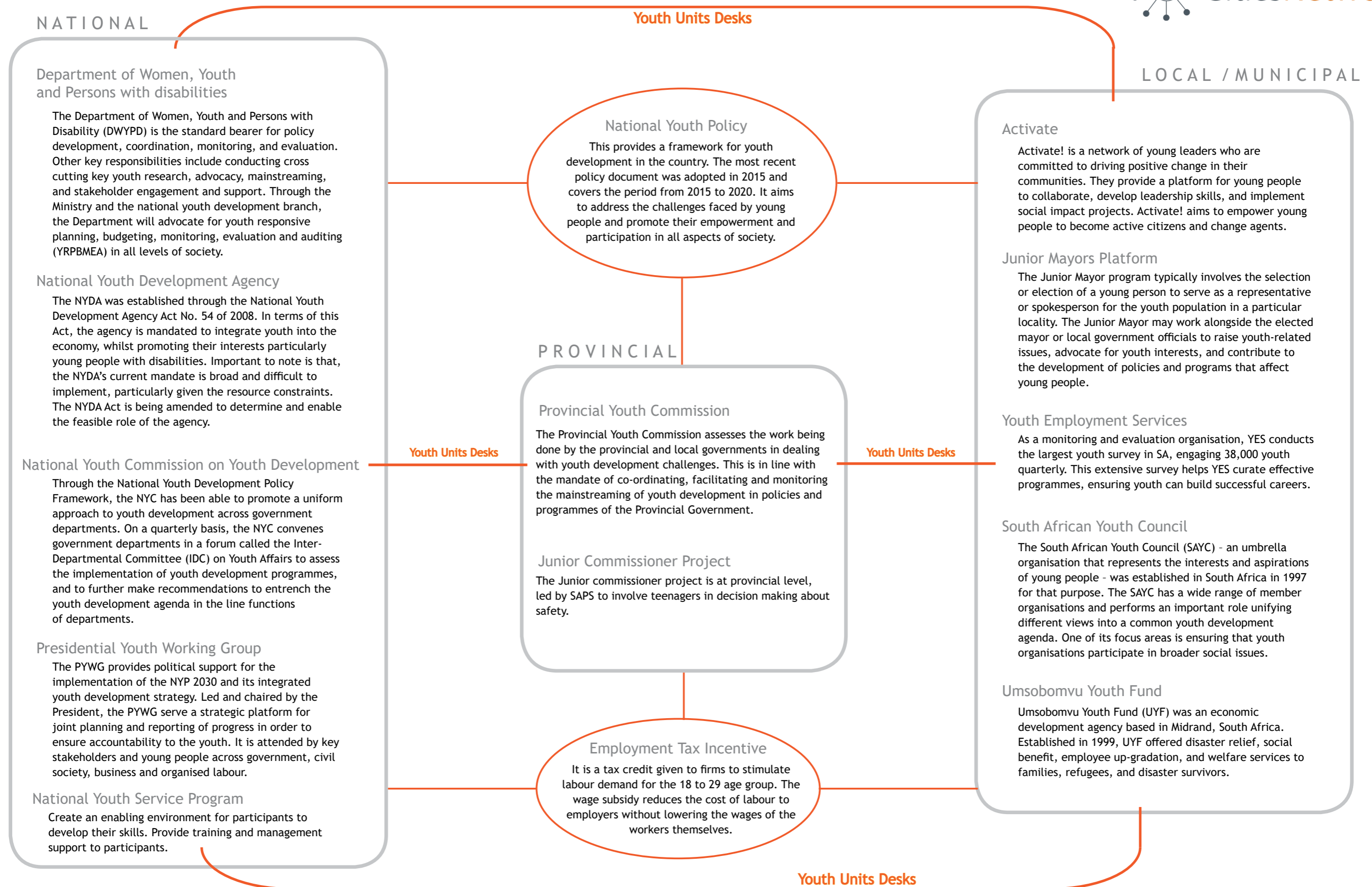


Diagram 1: illustrating structure of the spheres of government and the various administrative, legislative powers and roles found under each sphere.

The youth engagement landscape is informed by the [National Development Plan](#) and the [National Youth Development Agency \(NYDA\) Act No 54 of 2008](#). From this basis, South Africa has a [National Youth Policy \(NYP\)](#) for 2020-2030, which is aimed at affecting positive youth development outcomes for young people across all spheres of government. There are various structures, bodies and programmes across spheres of government to engage youth and promote their development through participation. SA has always been thinking progressively about how we position children as partners to development and not just beneficiaries. And this dynamic has led to a lot of learner-led approaches being used by government and development organisations.

Level of government	Organisation/body/policy	Lead/initiator
National	National youth policy	Department of Youth Women and people with Disabilities
	Youth Employment Service (YES)	Public, private sector initiative
	Employment Tax Incentive	South African Revenue Service
	<u>Junior Commissioner Project</u>	South African Police Service
Provincial	Expanded Public Works Programme	Municipalities
Local	Durban Youth Council	Municipalities

Several types of policies are relevant for youth development, aiming to address the specific needs and challenges faced by young people. These are some key policy areas that are commonly considered in the context of this toolkit and youth development.

- Education Policies play a crucial role in youth development. They encompass international conventions and national legislation on ‘the rights of the child’ + various collaborative interventions between national, local spheres and academia to include children in urban planning (ThinkChild Toolkit: planning and designing with and for children). These policies aim to ensure equitable educational opportunities and enhance the knowledge, skills and capacities of young individuals.
- Civic engagement and participation policies Encourage youth in decision-making processes and empower young people as active citizens. These policies may involve councils, youth representation in governance structures, opportunities for youth-led initiatives and platforms for meaningful participation.
- Youth justice and protection policies address the needs of young people in conflict with the law or those at risk of exploitation, Violence, or abuse. These Policies aim to ensure fair and rehabilitative justice systems, protect youth rights, and provide supportive services for their reintegration into society.

There are a few notable shortcomings in the NYP with reference to very little having changed within the policy over the past 10 years. What is apparent is the need for more consistent and robust youth stakeholder engagement that feeds back into the NYP in ways that are articulated transparently for better monitoring and measurement of progress or lack thereof.

There are numerous bodies and organisations that work in the field of youth development from local community level to international. These organisations play a significant role in informing policies, implementation programs, conducting research and advocating for the rights and well-being of young individuals.

Furthermore there are several youth-led organizations and platforms in South Africa that play a crucial role in amplifying youth voices and advocating their rights and interests. Below are a few examples:

- The South African Youth Council (SAYC) is a national youth-led organization that represents the interests of young people across the country. It aims to empower young people, promote their rights, and provide a platform for them to engage with decision-makers. SAYC focuses on issues such as education, employment, health, and social justice.
- Activate! Change Drivers: Activate! is a network of young leaders who are committed to driving positive change in their communities. They provide a platform for young people to collaborate, develop leadership skills, and implement social impact projects. Activate! aims to empower young people to become active citizens and change agents.
- Youth Leadership Development Programs that are led by young people themselves, focusing on empowering their peers and addressing specific issues. These programs often include training, mentorship, and networking opportunities to support young leaders in their efforts to create change.

The [Integrated Urban Development Framework \(IUDF\)](#) is a national policy initiative led by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and describes the national development vision for cities in South Africa. The policy creates a framework for the development of cities which are economically inclusive, sustainable, well-governed, and resilient urban spaces, to address the unique conditions facing South Africa’s cities and towns. The IUDF has identified 9 levers, which are priorities for maximising the potential of urban areas. These levers are:



Diagram 2: IUDF levers

Making these levers a reality is the work of all of society, not just the government. The outcomes of this policy can only be achieved if we all take ownership of it and see ourselves as part of the solution. Through the SACN, COGTA showed leadership in this respect by creating the Open IUDF platform, which was designed to empower communities (through a seed fund) to make these goals a reality. Community activism and experimentation, led by young people, was a key feature of the Open IUDF. The platform created a space for community led projects to test out and implement ideas that address urban challenges and empower communities.

Between 2020 and 2023, the IUDF pilot seed funding, led by the SACN, has supported more than 13 projects from across the country. These projects illustrate the diverse, creative and grounded initiatives that exist in society and need support. Most of these initiatives funded were led by youth and had to respond to at least one of the policy levers of the IUDF. One of the funded projects, [The Langa Bicycle Hub](#) led by Mzikhona Mgedle, demonstrates how seeding action in a small way, through a R50 000 grant can have such a great impact. Langa Bicycle Hub is a community embedded business that was created to improve [urban safety and mobility in Langa, Cape Town](#). The hub teaches people how to cycle, engages with the taxi industry to improve safety for cyclists and is linked to the Langa Safety Patrol, which uses bikes to patrol the community. The hub has helped to promote access to on-motorised transport in Langa and facilitates the inclusion of youth in the local economy, while also facilitating improved safety in the township.

The impact of the IUDF seed grant through the IUDF, shows the impact of intermediaries such as the SACN in facilitating much-needed access to funding for community led initiatives. The IUDF forms the foundation of how municipalities are engaging with stakeholders and youth in particular, to ensure communities are empowered active citizens that can play a role in shaping urban development. From this perspective, it is clear that SA has a strong policy basis and more needs to be done to enable this kind of partnership, which has a sustainable impact on the ground.



figure 5: Gqeberha workshop
photo credit: Thobela Fibi

7. CREATIVE ECONOMIES & URBAN SAFETY: WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT FOR CITIES & TOWNS?

7.1. Why Cultural and Creative Economies?

Cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are key drivers of the creative economy in South Africa and they account for a significant amount of employment, economic growth, and innovation that contributes to the country's competitiveness and identity. The CCIs that are being referred to include performing arts, craft, film, fine art, music, gaming, museums, libraries, architecture, design and advertising. Despite the fact that young people are the main innovators in CCIs, these ecosystems do not provide them with enough sustainable benefits. Various factors contribute to this, one of which is the high entry threshold in the overall value chain. In some way or another, these industries have also been influenced by the digital age, which has enabled the integration of technology that has allowed artists to express themselves in new ways, enhanced audience engagement, streamlined production processes, and redefined the way creatives create, experience, and interact with art, media, and culture.

According to resolution 74/198 of the General Assembly on the International Year of Creative Economy in 2021, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

(UNCTAD) recommends prioritising creative economies to address a variety of global challenges that are interrelated. The resolution identified that the creative economy can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because it is connected to Goals 1 (no poverty), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities), 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns), 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies), and 17 (means of implementation and global partnerships). Hence, the cultural and creative sectors contribute to numerous other channels for positive social impact (social cohesion, nation building, well-being, health, education, inclusion, urban regeneration, etc.). The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has gone further in supporting the creative economy in Africa, by appointing Roberta Anna as the UNEP Supporter at the Concordia Annual Summit in New York in 2019 (<https://www.unep.org/ru/node/26482>).

Despite technological advancements, South African cultural policy still attributes CCIs to having untapped potential for

providing further social, economic, and spatial benefits to cities and communities. Apartheid's policies of racial segregation and oppression deeply affected CCIs in South Africa. There were strict censorship laws and restrictions on artistic expression under the apartheid regime, particularly for black artists. Artists and cultural activists at the time used their work to resist and challenge the oppressive regime despite these challenges.

Since the end of apartheid in 1994 and the establishment of a democratic South Africa, the country has gone through a period of transformation and cultural resurgence. The democratic government recognizes the potential of CCIs as a vehicle for nation-building, economic development, and social cohesion. Booyens (2012) makes the case for a more deliberate linkage between the creative industries in the global South and socio-economic objectives such as decreasing poverty, creating jobs and improving community involvement. That the creative industries should be "deeply embedded into the local urban environment and political economy because creative production creates symbolic value that can facilitate place making and city branding" (Gregory, 2016) is increasingly recognised.

Some of the notable policies that the government have implemented in support of the CCIs include the [Cultural and Creative Industries Development Strategy](#) (CCIDS). This strategy aimed to harness the economic potential of the creative sector and promote its sustainable development. The CCIDS identified various sub-sectors within the creative and cultural industries, including visual arts, performing arts, music, film and television, craft, design, heritage, and publishing. The CCIs have therefore experienced significant growth over the years contributing to the country's economy.

According to a 2018 Mapping Study by the South African Cultural Observatory, the cultural and creative industries contributed R63 billion per annum in the economy which represented 1.7 % of the total GDP. In 2017, the South African Cultural Observatory reported that the sector accounts for almost 7% of employment in the country and contributes about 2.97% to the Gross Domestic Product of the country (South African Cultural Observatory, 2022). This indicates that the CCIs are an important source of income and employment, particularly for young people and historically disadvantaged communities. The industries are also linked to the thriving tourism sector.

The country's rich cultural heritage, vibrant music scene, film industry, and diverse artistic expressions have attracted

both domestic and international tourists to cultural events and festivals, such as the Cape Town International Jazz Festival, National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, and Durban International Film Festival. These events are major attractions, contributing to tourism revenues and local economies at large.

There is a clear connection in how the industries have influenced policy, leadership, economic growth and advocacy in the sector and has further defined what the sector entails. However, it could be argued that this interest is mainly centralised in major metropolitan cities such as Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. This is unfortunate because CCIs are particularly significant for South African young people who make up about 77.6% of the population under the age of 35. South African youth unemployment is also amongst the highest in the world, making it one of the most pressing socio-economic issues.



7.2. eThekweni and the Creative Economy

EDGE, the eThekweni Municipality’s flagship economic publication, published an issue on creative economies in 2015. The purpose of this issue was to examine how the sector contributes to the metropolitan economy. There was also a focus on the sector’s relationship with city revitalisation. A number of precincts and hubs spurred entrepreneurial and cultural production in the city. The report notes that even though cultural and creative industries have grown, much of the activity operates independently. In order for the sectors to grow, the report further notes that the government needs to play an integral role in supporting the industries. The key sectors profiled as critical within the municipality include the film and television sector, fashion, music, publishing and the creative and design precinct within the city. The eThekweni Municipality City’s Economic Growth and Job Creation Strategy priority sectors also include creative industries, and it outlines ways in which the sector could be supported by various special-purpose vehicles.

As articulated during the engagement session held in Durban with representatives from the cultural and creative industries, it becomes clear that many of the problems restricting the sector’s growth are not self-inflicted. They are caused and aggravated by an economic, political and historical environment that does not enable the sector to grow. Gatekeeping was also mentioned during

the session as a stifling effect with the creative economy ecosystem. This gatekeeping was attributed to the different spheres of government, wanting to be the primary custodians of the industry, with very little willingness to delineate roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated its devastating impact on certain creative industries and deepened their pre-existing vulnerabilities, which is highlighted in the National Youth Policy (National Youth Policy, 2020).

The South African Cultural Observatory calculated that 95% of creative professionals surveyed had their work cancelled or indefinitely postponed during the period. Because of the precarity of CCIs, this has severely affected practitioners and has widened the call for ways in which government and business can well support the industry. In other instances, we have seen the Amapiano musical sound grow locally and internationally to influence popular culture and other diasporic sounds. Some visual artists have also exploited the digital space to forge markets and collaborations that have enhanced their practices and connections around the globe. This demonstrates that if the government can create an enabling environment for these industries and others to be further explored, they could derive further economic benefits.



figure 7: Gqeberha workshop
photo credit: Thobela Fibi

Below are some **Resources Centres and Organisations** identified by workshop participants as part of a mapping exercise that are working with cultural and creative industry practitioners in Durban:

Resource Centres	Contact Details/ Address	Description
Durban Art Gallery	031 311-2264/9 / 2nd floor, Durban City Hall, 234 Anton Lembede Street, Durban	DAG, now in its 2nd century of existence, is home to collections that are as diverse as the eThekweni population.
Community ZA	Instagram: @community_za / 3 Miller Street Morningside	Events space and gallery. It hosts the @itsrelatives party.
Kwa-Zulu Natal Society of Arts	(0)31 277 1705/ gallery@kznsagallery.co.za / 166 Bulwer Road. Glenwood. Durban. Kwazulu Natal. South Africa	Non-profit contemporary gallery
The Bat Centre	+2731 332 0451 / 45 Maritime Place Small Craft Harbour Victoria Embankment Durban KwaZulu-Natal 4001	The BAT Centre is a community arts development and cultural entertainment centre.
Phansi Museum	+27 (31) 206 2889 / 500 Esther Roberts Road, Glenwood, Durban	Phansi houses a unique collection of beadwork and traditional crafts and artifacts in South Africa.
Tamasa Gallery	031 207 1223 / 740 Currie Rd, Morningside, Durban	Fine Art Dealer, Sculpture and restorations
Campbell Collections	(031) 260 1720 / 220 Gladys Mazibuko Road, (formerly Marriott Road), Durban 4001	Campbell Collections collects, preserves and disseminates rare, unique, and specialized archival material reflecting political, economic, cultural and social changes in Africa.
Kwa-Muhle Museum	031 311 2213 / 130 Braam Fischer Rd	Apartheid History Museum

Durban Natural Science Museum	031 311 2256 / 1 City Hall, 212 Anton Lembede St, Central, Durban, 4001	The Durban Natural Science Museum has dynamic and innovative research and education programmes with a particular emphasis on Biodiversity Conservation, and Ecology.
K-Cap Kwa-Mashu	031 504 6970 / B25 Giya Road, Kwa Mashu 4360, KwaZulu Natal	Kwa Mashu Community Advancement Projects (K-CAP of Positive Arts) is a youth integrated arts and multimedia empowerment organization founded in October 1993
Innovate Durban	087 365 3131 / 12 Browns Road, Point, Durban, 4001	Innovate Durban (RF) NPC is a registered non-profit company to support innovators, innovation and the innovation ecosystem in Durban
Innovate Co-Lab	087 821 1023 / Umkhumbane Entrepreneurial Support Centre, 240 Harry Gwala Road, Wiggins, 4091	Innovate Durban (RF) NPC is a registered non-profit company to support innovators, innovation and the innovation ecosystem in Durban
The Pencil Club	1 Ncondo Place, Umhlanga Ridge, Umhlanga, 4320, South Africa	The Pencil is a community of people committed to commerce and culture, socialising and sustainability.
Elizabeth Sneddon Theater	+27 (031) 260 2296 / Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College Campus Mazisi Kunene Rd (formerly King George V Avenue/South Ridge Road) Glenwood 4041 South Africa	Performing Arts theater at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
KUMISA	+27 31 201 1731 / 114 Bulwer Road, Glenwood, Durban	The KwaZulu-Natal United Music Industry Association (KUMISA) is a non-profit, provincial music industry association incorporated in terms of Section 21 of the Companies Act.
Contemporary Arts Archive	@contemporaryartsarchive	An incubator for critical thinking & developing new photographic work safeguarding the archive connecting KZN photo makers.
Centre for Creative Arts	031 260 1650 / Centre for Creative Arts, Mazisi Kunene Rd, Glenwood, Berea, 4001	Home of leading festivals - @poetryafrica @timeofthewriter @artfluencefest @durbaninternationalfilmfest @jomba_dance
Amasosha Arts Movement	@amasoshaartsmovement	Amasosha Art Movement is a vibrant collective of young Durban Artist that promote solidarity and the idea of collaboration amongst the artist
Siyakhula Music School	+27) 079-180-9640 / 4 Ntonto Mkhize Grove, Umlazi, 4031, KZN, South Africa	Siyakhula Community Music Center. Enhancing creativity, improving quality of life and self-worth through Creative Arts.
UKZN Jazz Centre	031 260 3385 / University of Kwa-Zulu Natal	The Centre for Jazz and Popular Music is a jazz is a jazz centre at UKZN
Makerspace	031 001 3691 / 51 Station Dr, Morningside, Durban, 4001	Makerspace is a non profit innovation technology space that empowers marginalised people to learn product development.

7.3. Why Urban Safety

Urban safety is a pressing concern for cities worldwide, particularly in regions where crime rates and social disparities are prevalent. In particular, violence, crime and safety are ever-present considerations that affect freedom of movement, economic participation, social cohesion and access to public spaces in cities. Studies show that crime and violence negatively affect citizens' psychosocial well-being and physical safety, and negatively impact urban productivity and sustainability. The South African Cities Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG) found that inequality levels (measured by the Gini coefficient) were a very strong predictor of crime and violence levels in a country.

The inequality can be attributed to South Africa's apartheid past, which even after 30 years, entrapped some racial groupings into poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion. Furthermore, the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) frames the importance of urban safety - Goal 11, in particular - namely as cities being engines of development, and therefore needing to be inclusive, safe with emphasis on public space & participatory governance (inclusive particularly of vulnerable groups) (SACN, 2022)

Urban safety is about understanding crime rates and violence in a given area. Numerous studies have investigated crime trends in South Africa. They have found that South Africa

has one of the highest crime rates, especially in urban areas (Ndlela, 2020). Robbery, carjacking, assault, and theft are some of the prevalent crimes. This poses a significant challenge to urban safety and affects the well-being and security of citizens, particularly young people who often participate in night leisurely and economic activities. South Africa is also plagued with gang-related violence, particularly in townships and informal settlements.

This is one of the biggest challenges that is facing Nelson Mandela Bay, where engagements were held for the project. South Africa also has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the world as measured by the gini coefficient. This disparity manifests itself through a skewed income distribution, unequal access to opportunities, and regional disparities. The inequality then contributes to social tensions and crime rates, as individuals living in poverty-stricken urban areas are more likely to resort to criminal activities as a means of survival (International Monetary Fund, 2020).

Whereas there is a valid and growing concern around police states and cities in the global north, South Africa's previously disadvantaged spaces remain significantly under-policed and under-resourced. They shoulder a disproportionate portion of the burden for high violence and crime. The

picture is more grim when applied to vulnerable groups such as women and children. South Africa's police-to-citizen ratio is also relatively low compared to international standards. The South African Police Services Annual Report 2021/2022 noted that there is one police officer—excluding administrative staff—for every 424 people (South African Police Services, 2022). This results in limited police presence and response capacity, making it challenging to combat crime and maintain urban safety. Another critical factor that affects crime includes poor urban planning and inadequate infrastructure in some areas. This includes lack of street lighting, poorly maintained roads, and inadequate public spaces can create an environment conducive to criminal activities.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach involving law enforcement, community engagement, urban planning, and social programs aimed at addressing poverty and inequality. Improving urban safety in South Africa requires concerted efforts from government, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, and the community at large.

7.4. Nelson Mandela Bay and Urban Safety

In the State of Urban Safety in South Africa, published by the [South African Cities Network](#) in 2022, Nelson Mandela Bay has overtaken Cape Town as the most violent city in the country with the highest murder rates. The factors attributed to these escalating crime rates are associated with factors that drive crime. These factors include declining socioeconomic conditions, inequality, and increased political corruption that result in lower police and criminal justice performance, leading to declining public trust in the government (SACN, 2022). In response to South Africa’s burgeoning crime rates, the National Development Plan (NDP) has a chapter entitled “Building Safer Communities” which makes safety provisions for vulnerable populations, including women and children, as well as young people.

The GIZ, Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme, together with South African government and civil society partners, developed a [toolkit](#) on how to achieve participatory safety planning within communities. Some of the key interventions proposed in the Toolkit are participatory tools that are in line with the principles of the “Building Safer Communities” plan through the provision of a roadmap for achieving national policy at a local level, e.g. through the work of Community Safety Fora and the integration of safety into municipal Integrated Development Planning (GIZ, 2014).

The toolkit also guides users in the systematic planning of violence prevention and safety measures at a local level. It discusses ways to foster collaboration between law enforcement agencies, community organisations, and residents to prevent crime and enhance safety. The toolkit aims to ensure that community policing and overall safety has the potential to foster trust, improve communication, and strengthen social cohesion within neighbourhoods. Urban planning tools are also highlighted as a significant influence on urban safety outcomes. Well-designed, well-maintained public spaces and improved lighting can positively impact safety levels

The below diagram shows a participatory impact monitoring tool that guides a systematic approach to violence prevention. The diagram shows that communities must plan and adopt a safety plan that could potentially respond to their safety needs. This can ensure that information regarding urban safety is well collected to pick up any emerging trends and patterns. After the collection of the data, the data should be analysed to refine the plan and create new strategies that could ensure the community safety is improved.



Diagram 3: Conceptual Framework On The Systemic Approach To Violence Prevention. Source: (GIZ, 2014).

8. BUILDING THE TOOLS: TAKING A SPATIAL APPROACH TO YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

A discussion of the lessons learned from youth engagement sessions held at Durban University of Technology (DUT) and Nelson Mandela University (NMU) in April 2023 on the creative economies (eThekweni) and urban safety (NMB), respectively - is presented in this section. Thereafter, youth engagement techniques will be suggested that focus on young people’s experiences of city space, with impact on creative sectors and economies and youth inclusivity broadly. The proposed approaches, methods and techniques for engagement can apply to any subject area.

8.1. Methods Used in Engagements

Both engagements in eThekweni and Gqeberha used two main methods to engage youth participants in the form of:

- Interactive mapping exercises
- Storytelling: Participants share experiences and information

‘Community Safety Mapping’ exercises were used in both Gqeberha and eThekweni engagement workshops that complemented the storytelling method as well an ideas factory approach that complemented the interactive mapping approach. These methods helped to get youth participants to loosen up and start thinking about Creative economies and Urban safety experiences spatially.



figure 8: eThekweni workshop
photo credit: Nondumiso Sibiya

8.2. Lessons From eThekwini Youth Engagement: Enhancing Creative Economies' Management

The Youth engagement workshop in eThekwini took place on the 20th of April 2023 at the Durban University of Technology's Urban Futures Centre, where 20 youth creative practitioners based in eThekwini discussed various issues and themes around creative economies and the support young people in this sector require from Government and corporate/private sector.

8.2.1. Emerging Themes from eThekwini Engagement

Municipality/ City Development Agencies

- There are many creative spaces/venues that could be used for creative economies, but they are not accessible.
- There is a lack of understanding of the role of government and the municipality, powers and autonomies, budgets and financial cycles.
- Importance of understanding governance processes as a creative, e.g. a threat of CCIFSA being the sole governing body for creatives in motion.
- There are power dynamics (political, socioeconomic, governance) that affect the youth participation in the creative economy.

- Poor knowledge retention/knowledge transfer of past interventions that have been undertaken in the city by the City or other government departments .



figure 9: eThekwini workshop
photo credit: Nondumiso Sibiyi

Private Sector/Corporates/ NGOs/Civil Organisations

- The importance of sharing knowledge in platforms that young people are already using in the City.
- There is a need for strengthened understanding and relations between the creative sector and the private sector.
- Lack of understanding of the different value chains for the creative economy e.g., visual cultures, art management etc.
- There is a need for reputable art management professionals, curators, and representatives, to support youth to navigate emerging challenges and opportunities presented by innovations such as in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) space, related to intellectual property rights and so forth.

Lack of information for creative practitioners e.g.

- South African Music Royalty Organization (SAMRO) royalty collection processes
- Gallery representation
- Setting up a creative practice
- Writing proposal
- Copyright



figure 10: eThekweni workshop
photo credit: Nondumiso Sibiyi

8.3. Lessons From Gqeberha Youth Engagement: Mapping Urban Safety Experiences In The City

The Youth engagement workshop in Gqeberha took place on the 25th of April 2023. The engagement was attended mainly by students from Nelson Mandela University from different academic streams including students studying ICT and Civil Engineering. 80% of the students were not originally from the city of Gqeberha, with some originally from KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and Gauteng, and moved to Gqeberha to study. Also in attendance were two Gqeberha-based creative entrepreneurs covering the event, together with representatives from SACN and BantuLab who co-facilitated the session. A total of 12 participants were in attendance.

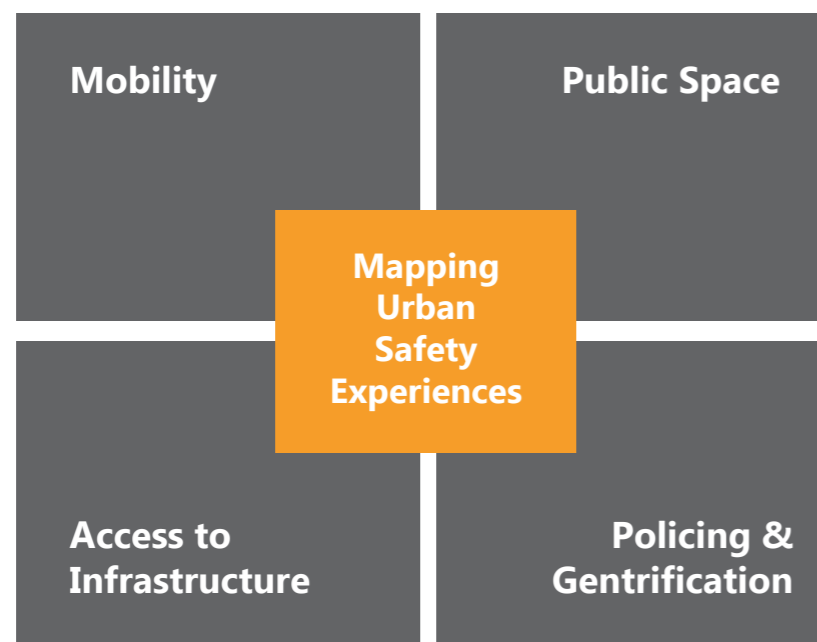


figure 11: Gqeberha workshop
photo credit: Thobela Fibi

8.3.1. Emerging Themes from Gqeberha Engagement

The engagement session mapped out Urban Safety experiences in the City as experienced by the attendees of the engagement workshop. Themes explored included **mobility, transport, public space, infrastructure, the economy, safety and spatial elements** in relation to affordability, access, social integration etc. Whether spaces were degraded, suburban or gentrified emerged as a big determinant for academic performance and outcomes in terms of susceptibility to crime and violence.

Among the questions facilitators asked was:

“What influences the routes you take during the week when going to school, other places of socializing or work?”

The mapping exercise aimed at getting participants to start thinking in spatial terms in relation to safety and understanding the key elements that influence feelings or perceptions of safety in different parts of Gqeberha. Participants were also probed to think about what spatial infrastructure and safety initiatives (or lack thereof) they’ve come across in the city that contribute to them feeling safe or not?



Some of the common threads of feeling unsafe by the participants was lack of familiarity of many spaces in the city as they were students who had recently moved to Gqeberha from elsewhere and had perceptions on lack of safety in certain spaces they were not used to.

Mobility and Travel

It emerged that patterns of travel of many of the participants change during the week versus on weekends. During the week they mainly travel using campus-owned transport to-and-from school whereas on weekends their movements change. They travel further out of the city to visit social/entertainment spots in the northern townships, away from the bay area.

Some participants expressed that traveling to do errands during the weekend such as purchasing groceries is not safe, from Northend to Summerstrand. They use student shuttles to travel to campus, in the early mornings and evenings, and often feel unsafe when they get off at Missionvale Campus where 'junkies' target them as they walk to the student residences. Some of the participants mentioned limitations around mobility that affect their academics e.g. that they cannot stay on campus beyond 6:30 in the evenings due to unsafety and rational fears around this.

Access Privilege

Access privilege was a key theme that came up in the engagement where students travelling from outside Summerstrand, who live in off campus residences, have less access to resources such as libraries in the evenings.

The university shuttle only runs until 10pm.

- Safer transport was highlighted as a big issue. Parliament street, a popular entertainment destination in the city, was raised as an unsafe space due to illicit drug related activities associated to foreign nationals.
- Access to law enforcement and lack of ability to report incidents with the police was raised as an issue where trust by youth in the city with law enforcement is compromised.
- Lack of Access control in certain student residences was raised by one of the participants as making them feel unsafe. Street muggings also raised as a common occurrence, even during the day.
- Upmarket gentrified areas in Summerstrand were deemed safer due to presence of private security personnel, unlike in areas in the outskirts of Summerstrand where there is no security presence at all.
- Kwadwesi area was identified as having (teenage) drug related crimes, with locations closer to coloured areas associated with drugs.

8.3.2. Suggested Safety Interventions

The general feeling from the youth in attendance was that safety interventions are not influenced by youth or the general public but rather by city officials who act unilaterally. Some of the suggested safety interventions raised by participants were:

Municipality/ City Development Agencies

- Reduce levels of homelessness on streets as homeless street dwellers increase feelings of unsafety.
- Reduce amount of abandoned buildings.
- Increase opportunities for work and productivity in public spaces and buildings for young people to reduce amount of drug and alcohol abuse on the streets.

Law Enforcement/ Police Services/ Safety Organisations

- Improve Police Visibility.
- Place Mobile Police Stations in crime hot spots. Special mention was made of a mobile police unit that has since been removed post the covid-19 pandemic, as a unilateral decision by officials.
- Close down taverns that are not registered.
- Build culture of confidence in reporting crimes within the community and general public.

Private Sector/Corporates/ NGOs/Civil Organisations

- Sponsor young entrepreneurs and create talent shows and creative spaces for youth to be productive.
- Develop appropriate youth culture activities rather than open-ended multi-purpose halls.
- Open free Rehab facilities to help reduce drug issues.
- Improve social environments to avoid relapsing of drug addicts after being rehabilitated.
- Develop more productive, activated public spaces.

9. A PARTNERED APPROACH: EXAMPLES OF YOUTH INCLUSIVE TECHNIQUES TO ADDRESSING URBAN SAFETY CHALLENGES - THE GIZ INCLUSIVE VIOLENCE AND CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMME AS A CASE

Youth are central to violence prevention as they face the highest exposure to violence and crime. Youth are central to violence prevention as they face the highest exposure to violence and crime, both as victims and perpetrators. Maintaining safety in schools has become more important in recent years, as violence and crime has become more prevalent in schools, which are microcosmic of society. The Department of Basic Education and the [The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit \(GIZ\)](#) have designed a programme to strengthen coordination and make safer spaces a reality within schools. This programme is a tri-lateral intervention by the Governments of Germany, South Africa and more recently, Canada. GIZ is the implementing agency on behalf of the aforementioned. This schools-based initiative is one component of violence and crime prevention which is a wider German/SA/Canada intervention supporting preventive approaches to crime and violence at various levels. The [National Inclusive and Safer Schools Partnership](#) (NISSP) is currently being rolled out in 5 provinces and aims to support 100 schools across the country. The initiative has many facets, and one of the offerings is the [Masifunde Change Maker](#) network, which is a learner-led approach that activates learner leaders at a school to play an active role in prevention of violence in their schools. The topics of this programme include school safety planning, bullying and the prevention of LGBTQI+ discrimination.

The project identifies about 15 learner leaders in grade 8 and 9 to be activated as change-makers. From their early high school years, learners are equipped with skills and information to implement programmes up to their matric year. These learner leaders play an active role in implementing evidence-informed activities to improve safety in their schools. Once they have set this agenda, learners are provided support through local civil society organisations to deliver workshops and are supported to participate in School safety committees, which are usually created and run by adults. Masifunde gives learners a voice and an opportunity to create school safety plans, which are used to gauge the incidences of violence and can inform community safety planning. Community safety planners and the police service use this information that is informed by learners' experiences. There is increased acceptance on the ground for children to take a leading role, where children are empowered to lead community dialogues. One of the key areas in violence prevention is being able to support an individual to build resilience to not become violent or being vulnerable to become a victim of violence.

“So starting young at the high school level empowers children and gives them a language to articulate what they are already experts in: which is living in an overwhelmingly violent society. This approach then starts to give children an active role in making them more resilient, and support their peers to not participate in violence.” This innovative approach led by the GIZ and the Department of Basic Education empowers learners to build their resilience and have an impact at the behaviour change level. The use of schools as a site of intervention for community programmes has a long history in South Africa, and this approach has applicability for different spheres of society that youth occupy.

“Through this initiative, children are empowered with knowledge and skills, and they take this information to their peers. So a 14 year-old can be empowered to lead a workshop on gender-based violence in their school. This approach centres peer-to-peer learning and the children set an agenda for what safety and inclusion looks like in their schools.”

Noxolo Thabatha, GIZ

10. HOW CAN MUNICIPALITIES CREATE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

10.1. How Government Works

Before looking at creating better outcomes for youth, the role of municipalities needs to be clarified. One of the main areas of misunderstanding amongst young people is how government works. There is also a gap in understanding the difference between national and municipal/local governments; what their respective powers and functions are.

“There are three layers of government: you have national government, provincial government and local government. Your local government would be the ones closest to your community. Municipalities and cities are like the foot soldiers of the other spheres of government.”

Thandeka Mlaza-Lloyd, City of Johannesburg

The Constitution of South Africa prescribes that there are 3 spheres of government, which are inter-dependent, but each have their functions. The Constitution defines the roles and responsibilities of each sphere of government.

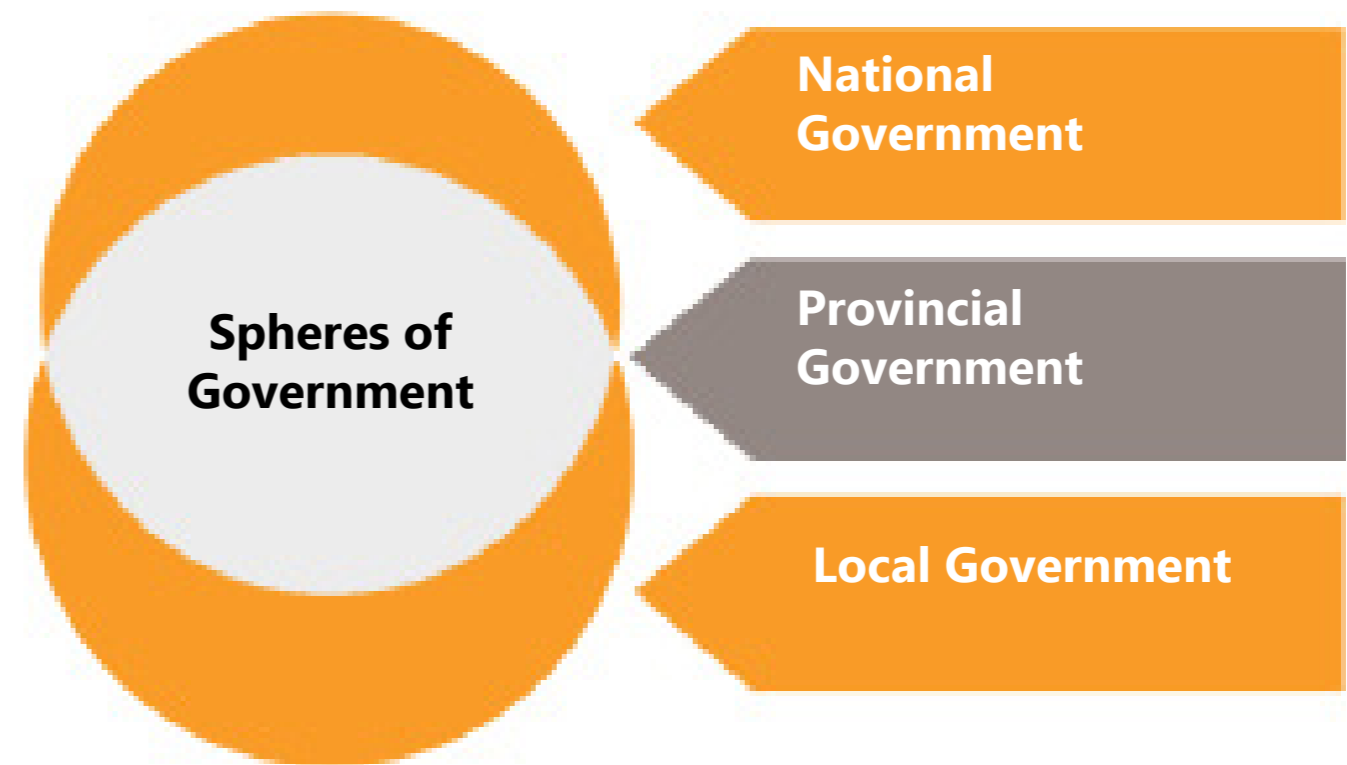


Diagram 4: Spheres of Government

NATIONAL

Central government administration:

- Parliament
- The presidency
- Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)
- Department of International relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)
- Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI)

Justice and protection services:

- Department of Correctional Services
- Home Affairs
- Department of Police (SAPS)
- State Security agency
- Office of Chief Justice
- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

Financial and administration services:

- Department of Public Enterprises, including Eskom, South African Airways and Transnet
- Department of Public Service and Administration
- National Treasury

Economic services and infrastructure development:

- Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
- Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, including SABC and the Post Office
- Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
- Department of Human Settlements
- Department of Mineral Resources and Energy
- Department of Small Business Development (DSD) including the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA)
- Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
- Department of Transport
- \Department of Water and Sanitation

Social services:

- Department of Basic Education
- Department of Employment and Labour
- Department of Health
- Department of Higher Education and Training (universities and TVET colleges)
- Department of Science and Innovation
- Department of Social Development
- Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, including the National Arts Council (NAC) and national museums, theatres etc.

PROVINCIAL

Legislative and executive powers

Agriculture
 Casinos
 Cultural affairs
 Education (excluding higher education)
 Environment
 Health service
 Human settlements
 Language policy
 Nature conservation
 Police services
 Public transport
 Regional planning and development
 Road traffic regulation
 Tourism
 Trade and industrial promotion
 Traditional authorities
 Urban and rural development
 Vehicle licensing
 Welfare services

Exclusive Competency of provinces

Abattoirs (slaughterhouses)
 Ambulance services
 Liquor licences
 Museums other than national museums
 Provincial cultural matters
 Provincial recreational activities
 Provincial roads and traffic

LOCAL MUNICIPAL

Role of Local Government

- To promote a safe and healthy environment
- To promote a safe and accountable local government
- To promote social and economic development
- To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner
- To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government

Functional areas of Municipal planning

- Air pollution
- Building regulations
- Child care facilities
- Electricity and gas reticulation
- Local tourism
- Municipal health care services
- Municipal public transport
- Storm water management in built up area
- Water and sanitation services
- Trading regulations
- Municipal public works

What does municipal planning do?

- provides for the medium- and long-term direction of development for the municipality;
- regulates public and private developments and investments;
- provides a strategic framework for annual budgeting;
- coordinates and integrates sectoral plans and programmes;
- regulates the use of land and regulates building according to the National Building Regulations to ensure safety and health standards are met.

10.2. The Functions & Powers Of National Government

National government makes laws, policies and sets and disburses budgets for the provision of services. National government is divided into 3 categories as shown in the diagram 4. National government is also separated into clusters, which have various entities as shown in diagram 5. Its legislative powers enable it to make laws and grant executive powers to make decisions in their regard.

“I think all of us are government in a sense because you then get to decide or you we should be able to decide what happens in your space and you should be capacitated enough to be able to even affect the change that you feel or whatever direction that you feel should happen in your space”.

Thandeka Mlaza-Lloyd, City of Johannesburg

10.3. The Functions & Powers Of Provincial Government

National Council of Provinces (NCOP) is the upper house of National parliament. It consists of 90 provincial delegates, i.e. 10 delegates for each of the nine provinces. Each province has its own legislature (law-making powers) as well as an executive council that makes decisions and creates policies. The executive consists of:

- A Premier
- Members of the executive council (MECs), who are responsible for provincial departments

10.4. The Categories & Role Of Local Government

The constitution provides for 3 categories of municipality which vary by size and mandate. There are 278 municipalities in South Africa:

- 8 metropolitan cities (“cities” refer to category A municipalities).
- 44 district municipalities
- 226 local municipalities

Municipalities are made up of Councils, with the Mayor as executive decision-maker. Municipalities are responsible for service delivery etc. with Metro municipalities having additional responsibilities and function.

“There are concerns about how some of the business of Council is being coordinated, which leads the Youth to not identify the difference between local government and other spheres of government .These roles and responsibilities should differentiate the work of government with the intention to promote the active participation of youth.” Mabhuti Dano, Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

There is an increasing need for the government to work collaboratively with stakeholders like business, communities and research organisations to achieve better outcomes.

“Government cannot be seen as just a city or, the national or provincial development. All of us are government within our different spaces.”

Thandeka Mlaza-Lloyd, City of Johannesburg

Most government functions are overlapping in some way or another which creates complexity in administration. This is why co-operative governance is so important to ensure that services are delivered in a systematic and efficient manner. Each municipality has a council where decisions are made and municipal officials implement the work of the municipality. The council is made up of elected members who approve policies and by-laws for the area.

Community members need to know where to find dedicated structures, offices and outlets where grievances can be reported to improve the delivery and sustainability of municipal services. The distinction between the political and administrative arms of local government is very important to understand as only a few young people appear to know. Only a few young people appear to know where to lodge complaints or seek information about municipal services, which contributes to scepticism towards, and mistrust of, municipal government structures. Young people also often do not know how to engage directly with their community leaders and finding out [who is your ward councillor](#) may be a good place to start.

10.5. Money Matters and Municipalities

Spending and income play an important role in determining local government’s ability to deliver services. Nationally raised revenue, disbursed through National Treasury, is divided between the different municipalities through a formula, which allocates funding based on the population size.

Provincial government is almost entirely dependent on national government for fiscal transfers with the big spending items being education and health – revenue is allocated between provinces by a formula.

Local government varies in the level of dependency – large authorities such as Johannesburg are mainly self-funded through property rates, service charges, traffic fines etc. The big spending items are water and electricity

All local authorities required to prepared a 5-year Integrated Development Plan (IDP) as the framework for all budgeting

Diagram 6: Fiscal role of government

It is through the IDP that municipalities determine their budget through prioritisation of the communities needs and investment priorities. Municipalities are required by legislation to collect their own income. But sometimes, this is not possible. When the residents fail to pay for their services or generally are of a low income, it means the municipality is not able to collect its revenue.

Where Municipalities Get Their Money From

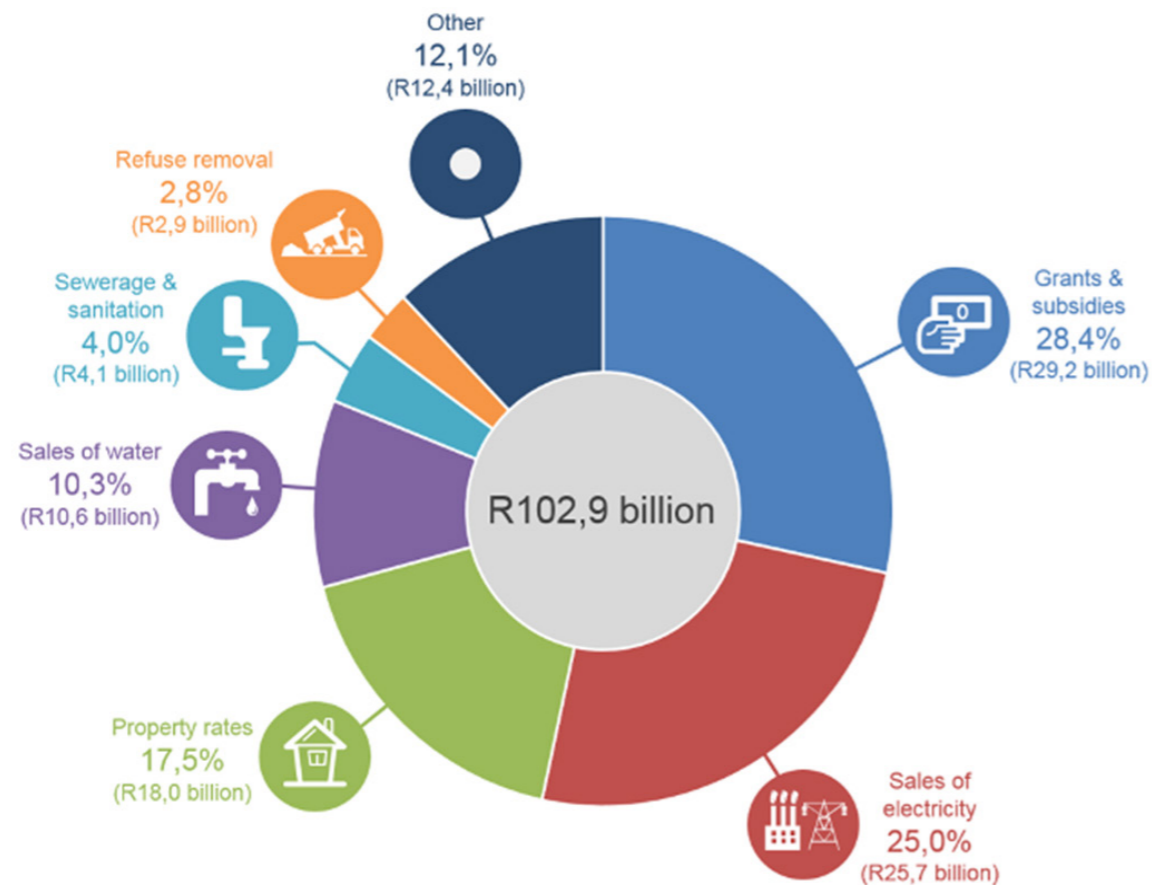


Diagram 7: Source - Quarterly Financial Statistics of Municipalities (Figures as per December 2018)

The diagram above shows how municipalities generate their income. Municipalities can obtain their income from 2 sources: income generated from the municipality itself or fiscal transfers from other spheres of government (through grants and subsidies). The more a municipality can generate its own income, the more independent it can be. Most municipalities generate their income from grants and subsidies, the sale of electricity and from property rates.

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10.6. The Role of the Municipality & Government in promoting Youth Participation

Local Government is explicitly mandated with fostering and driving community participation. The Nelson Mandela Bay Special Programmes Unit considers Youth to fall under their vulnerable groups categories which also include people living with disabilities, children, elderly women and their mandate is constantly being extended from time to time, dealing with all vulnerable groups. They highlighted a decline of youth participation in Council programs. This has been due to an increasing rate of unemployment in the city since the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic and young people have since aligned themselves the with political parties in order to access certain (economic) opportunities, which has led other young people having less interest in issues of governance, hence the low participation of young people.

“...with our youth development & women empowerment initiatives we want to create a space where there’s optimal use of available resources & some alignment in our approaches & strategies in responding to challenges”.

Thabisa Mandla, Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

10.7. Government Channels for Youth Support

Through the various government departments outlined above, there are channels and mechanisms to support business development that young people can take advantage of.

The [Department of Small Business Development \(DSBD\)](#) has a [Small Enterprise Development Agency \(SEDA\)](#), which assists business owners with non-financial business support. The agency was established to promote entrepreneurship and develop small enterprises by providing customised non-financial business support services that result in business growth and sustainability. SEDA provides training, facilitates access to finance, mentorship, export readiness, franchising, business planning and my other business support tools. SEDA has support centres in all 9 provinces. Find your nearest centre here.

The [Small Enterprise Finance Agency \(SEFA\)](#) is an agency of the DSBD and provides financial products and services to qualifying SMMEs and cooperatives. The agency operates as a development finance institution to foster the establishment, development, and growth of SMMEs. SEFA funds initiatives in the services sector (including retail, wholesale trades, and tourism); manufacturing (including aggro-processing); agriculture; construction; mining and green industries (renewable energy, waste, and recycling management). SEFA's head office is in Centurion, Gauteng but has a national presence.

The [National Arts Council \(NAC\)](#) is an agency of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, with a mission of being a responsible funding agency, supporting free and diverse artistic expression for the development, promotion and sustainability of the arts sector.

The NAC has a yearly call for applications from arts practitioners and registered arts organisations to apply for funding. The disciplines supported are in craft, dance, literature, multi-discipline, music, theatre and visual arts. The minimum budget allocation for applications is R50 000 and a maximum of R350 000.

The [National Youth Development Agency's \(NYDA\)](#) initiatives support young entrepreneurs to access financial and non-financial business development to enable them to establish or grow their businesses. Depending on their individual needs, young people whose business ideas qualify for the Grant Programme will undergo some of the agency's non-financial support services, including mentorships, market linkages and business training programmes.

The [Technology Innovation Agency's \(TIA\) Youth Technology Innovation Programme \(YTIP\)](#) exists to drive and increase the participation of young people in the economy by providing funding for the development of techno-enterprises. The

programme is targeted at funding and supporting youth between the ages of 18-30 who have innovative ideas that have the potential to establish new businesses. The programme's services include infrastructure, business support, advisory, skills development and intellectual property management. This link <https://bit.ly/3qxHULD> has all the info on who to contact to apply.

From a conversation with City officials in Gqeberha, the officials shared that their unit has been working on developing institutional education platforms within the school environment to engage young people from the age of 14 to 18 in the form of Children's forums, where young people speak through these platforms. These platforms are a combination of dialogues/debates amongst children, students from institutions of higher learning, and older persons to participate in debates. Some of those dialogues worked very well in terms of young people understanding older persons and vice versa and helped the youth to get to know more about government and national government policies.

10.8. Using Property Management For Developmental Outcomes

From the engagements with youth, it emerged that there are abandoned or underused properties in the City that young people wish to take over to run their businesses or do community work from. While this is an admirable goal, it is important to understand how property management in municipalities works. Many South African Cities have created companies or agencies that help them to manage each of their functions. For example, the City of Johannesburg has created Pikitup, which manages its waste collection; City Power which manages the provision of electricity to households and Joburg Water to manage its supply of water to residents. The [Joburg Roads Agency \(JRA\)](#) is in charge of municipal roads and the [Joburg Development Agency's \(JDA\)](#) function is to stimulate and support area-based economic development. The [Johannesburg Property Company \(JPC\)](#) is an agency established to manage the portfolio of city-owned properties. When buildings are abandoned, they cede to the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. This means that municipalities do not have much control over abandoned buildings as the power to rehabilitate or maintain them becomes a responsibility of the national department. This presents a challenge for creative and cultural industries in terms of accessing space and making creative uses of these abandoned buildings.

“A lot about community development is really getting political, you know? And really, young people have suffered from that”...

Mabhuti Dano, Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

10.9. Youth Inclusive Techniques To Property Management For Developmental Outcomes - The Case Of Drill Hall, Johannesburg

One example that illustrates the complexity of using public buildings by the youth is the Drill Hall, Johannesburg. The [Drill Hall](#) is a neglected heritage site bordering Hillbrow and the inner city, at the heart of the inner city in Johannesburg. The Drill Hall was built as a military space in 1904, where South African soldiers would sign up for the first World War. The site later became a limb factory to help soldiers injured during the war. During apartheid, the Drill Hall was used as a combined prison, before a separate prison was built for women at the neighbouring [Constitution Hill](#). The Treason Trial was also held at the Drill Hall and the space has since undergone significant spatial transformation. Having gone through a fire and subject to a long-standing management battle, the National Department of Public Works, the City of Johannesburg approached the national department to take over the management of the building. The site includes a large public square, office space and studios where people can live. Through the intervention of the City through the [Johannesburg Development Agency \(JDA\)](#), the Drill Hall was transformed into a hub for artists in the city, hosting youth-led skating initiatives, a children's library, an art gallery and performance artists. An organisation called [Keleketla Library](#) led this intervention and assisted the City to breathe life into the space and bring a new cultural identity more reflective of the diversity of the city's residents.

The Drill Hall also has studios, which are mostly occupied by youth and vulnerable women, who form part of a shelter for victims of abuse and gender-based violence. The progression of the COVID-19 pandemic put many residents of the city at risk, as people lost their jobs and began to occupy the Drill Hall gallery

in a new wave of homelessness. Not long after that, drug users also moved into the space, plunging the Drill Hall into a state of decline. Struggling to continue their activities and maintain a sense of safety in the space, Keleketla Library moved out to Maboneng, leaving a few artists and organisations in the space to self-determine and self-manage.

Exotically Divine Pulse, a youth-led, non-profit and arts-and-artist-driven organisation that took up residence in the space under Keleketla Library, saw this as an opportunity to rethink how the space can be maximised for its transformative potential. The organisation began to plant medicinal trees, medicines and introduce nature art into the space, to change the atmosphere and juxtapose the history of the Drill Hall with its new reality. With the aim of reforesting the City by bringing plants and art into the space, the youth-led organisation has taken responsibility to maintain the integrity of this heritage site, even with homeless families and drug users still occupying the space. The introduction of the medicinal garden, the vertical farming and use of art and colour to soften up the space has transformed the perception of the space and brought dignity to the families and individuals living there. An improved sense of safety has been created through the introduction of plants and it is now a safe space for people in the city, who seek comfort and healing. Exotically Divine Pulse is an important example of guerilla/accupuncturist tactics, by youth, to overcome institutional red tape and forge ahead with their vision for the city.

Through the collection of waste, unwanted furniture and found items, Exotically Divine Pulse has established an art gallery, a plant nursery, a plant-based restaurant and hosts events, which bring vitality and diversity into the space.

The work of this non-profit has important lessons for urban governance and shows how neglected urban space can be revitalised by the initiative of young people. The Drill Hall case study shows how creatives can be involved and even lead the management of urban space, all with little to no resources. Through this initiative, a sense of community has been created, who now govern the space and ensure its safety by deterring drug users and undesirable behaviour - an illustration of self-governance and collective agency.

“(Development) is the only sector that offers space for people who genuinely care about this country. That’s why the development space is so broad. It’s not an area that is defined by one section of society...but you can find people who specialise in media in this space; people who specialise in therapy.

In SA it’s the only space that allows for whatever you feel your conviction is concerning this country and wanting to take that responsibility.”

Noxolo Thabatha, GIZ.

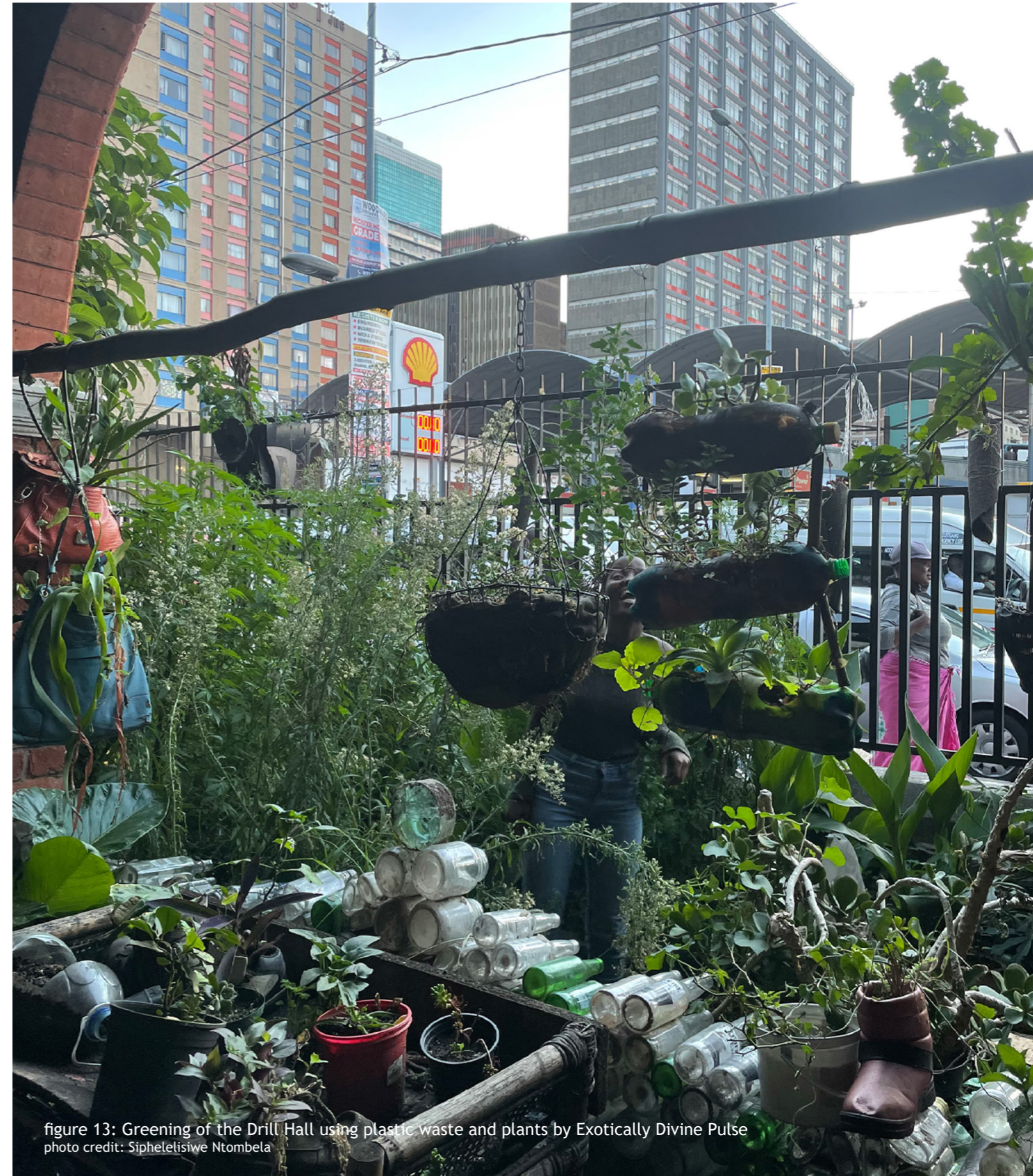


figure 13: Greening of the Drill Hall using plastic waste and plants by Exotically Divine Pulse
photo credit: Siphelisiwe Ntombela

11. CORPORATE SUPPORT TO YOUTH

11.1. How can Youth secure partnerships or funding support from government or corporate sector?

There is a growing interest from youth in engaging the private sector to help them realise their ideas, as the government is often difficult to partner with. There are often tedious redtape barriers and complexities with partnering with government budgeting cycles, fixed/rigid plans, stringent rules leading to very weak supply chain mechanisms for disbursing funds to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). An interview with the Youth Platform Manager from Yellowwood, one of South Africa's leading marketing strategy consultancies to get insight on how their work has helped corporates better understand the youth and think differently about them.

“...corporates have an interest in the youth based on what level of influence the youth have in culture...”

Ntombi Mkhwanazi, Yellowwood

The Youth Platform Manager highlighted that Yellowwood has always had a heightened interest to help corporates better understand the youth and think differently about them, and not only in the short term but how can corporates have a different perspective of the youth as a future generation. Through their GenNext platform, which outlines the GenNext Report, workshops and youth focused talk opportunities, they have actively revealed the different ways in which the youth can be identified as diverse groups with a variety of attitudes, preferences and behaviours that the corporate world can better understand and connect with in a meaningful and impactful way.

“...it would really be about taking it a step further by (corporates)becoming enablers of the youth and embedding themselves into the lives of youngsters in a seamless, intuitive yet meaningful manner”.

Ntombi Mkhwanazi, Yellowwood

11.2. Available Corporate Youth Skills Development & Entrepreneurship Opportunities

There are a number of corporate led platforms that youth can gain access to skills and entrepreneurship support from. Some of these include:

[Nedbank Youth X](#) - provides access to resources that can help youth in their entrepreneurial or career journeys.

[Standard Bank Feenix](#) - a crowdfunding pool that allows students access to funding for their education.

[MTN Pulse](#) - a youth portal for under 25's that equips young people with skills and resources such as internship and bursary opportunities.

[H&M science and tech initiative](#) to empower young female students

Nestlé ESAR x Youth Employment Service (YES) - a government led initiative providing 400 youth with valuable skills in the agricultural sector.

[National Lotteries Commission](#)

Old Mutual Foundation

[Telkom Adopt-a-project](#) - This is an initiative by the Telkom Foundation to give back to communities, and funding arts organisations is one of the foundation's strategic focuses.

[Nandos Creativity](#) - This is a fund that funds Southern African creativity, particularly art, design and music talents.

[Business of Arts South Africa](#) - BASA is committed to the relevance and sustainability of the arts in society and offers innovative programmes that provide and support knowledge transfer skills development and training in the cultural and creative sectors.

[Investec](#) - Investec sponsors sporting, art and cultural initiatives in South Africa

[Art and Culture Trust](#) - The Arts and Culture Trust funds cultural and creative practitioners in South Africa.

“We need to involve the private sector. I’m not so sure about politicians.”

Visualisation studios participant, Mangaung, 2020



*The Creative economy is an enabler to the Youth's Agency, however the **lack of safety** acts an impediment to this agency.*

figure 14: eThekweni workshop
photo credit: Nondumiso Sibiya

12 . RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITIES ON YOUTH SUPPORT

12.1. How Cities Should Meaningfully Engage, Include & Support Youth?

It is not enough that the potential of youth is recognized and acknowledged. Young people must be empowered with the knowledge and skills that unlock their full potentials and enable them to fully participate in and be contributors to the growth of their cities and society at large. Platforms must be provided where the voices of youth are heard and influence decision-making. Young people must be meaningfully included in governance and technical processes. As co-creators, they should have a role in the entirety of the development process: from knowledge generation, conceptualisation through to the implementation and assessment of outcomes. This section provides recommendations for improving youth participation and empowerment, to fill in the gaps highlighted in this toolkit.

12.2. Recommendations for City Officials

1. Facilitate Access To Space And Property

City officials should take on an advocacy approach to their work and use their influence to elevate the needs of youth, so that city-owned companies can be encouraged to use their properties to achieve developmental outcomes, such

as providing much needed operating space for youth-led initiatives. City officials who are interested in involving young people in urban development should be working to create an enabling environment for youth to participate in making cities more inclusive. An inclusive approach to urban regeneration should entrust youth to be custodians of neglected urban space and can have important lessons for improving governance in cities.

2. Support youth-led initiatives

There is a scarcity of state-driven support mechanisms for youth-led entrepreneurship endeavours and initiatives. Existing active programmes or communities need to be empowered, as they bring together socially and culturally diverse citizens.

“Independent activities in my community include mentoring of high school kids and personal fitness trainers. Opening hair salons, as there are many gifted people who love to work with hair in this community. The local school principals and the counsellor support these initiatives. It helps young people develop personal skills and keeps them away from the streets and from being involved in crime”
(Noxolo Thabatha, GIZ, 2023).

3. Improve Communication On Governance

There is not much coherent information about the local councillors in each community, including regular engagements to explain what councillors can (and cannot) do for their constituents and what community members can hold them accountable for. Once the youth are empowered with knowledge of what they can and cannot expect from their councillors and municipalities, their focus as active citizens can be directed and supported towards ensuring the youth are upskilled with the latest technologies. They could then find ways to create their own opportunities without depending on the government.

4. Develop Skills And Provide Continued Support

From the engagements held and research undertaken, there is an overwhelming agreement amongst youth that skills development needs special attention to help them to start their own initiatives or get access to employment opportunities. Employment and entrepreneurship centres that offer internet access and mentorship are needed to provide continued guidance and advice for youth development. Project and business funding is also needed to encourage youth economic participation. Financial literacy, financial management and support with writing proposals are also needed. As many young people are participating in the creative industries, support with

setting up a creative practice, understanding how institutions in CCIs work and navigating gallery representation are also practical areas of intervention. With the rapid innovation in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) space, young people increasingly and urgently need support to understand intellectual property and related rights.

5. Advocating for Youth Representation In Decision-Making

“Our families were living through apartheid and in one form or way, you became a development worker. I view development within that lens: that it is within the African identity to be a development worker. I was raised by development workers; I am a development worker and I think my children will be development workers. Just because of the sense of community responsibility being so intertwined with the African identity.” (Noxolo Thabatha, GIZ, 2023).

From this perspective, advocating for youth to have a more influential role in the development of their communities is part of expressing African identity, and is a much-needed

perspective to make inclusive cities a reality. From the engagement held in eThekweni, it emerged that advocacy work, which involves promoting and supporting a particular cause or issue can be rewarding and impactful. However, it also was clear that there are challenges that emerge if the process is not transparent or inclusive of the people who should be benefiting from the cause. For example, the [Cultural and Creative Industry Federation of South Africa](#) (CCIFSA) was one of the advocacy bodies that were discussed. This organisation’s mandate is to act as a unifying body that represents creative and cultural industries at an governmental, economic and social level.

Most of the creatives that were present in the engagement did not know about the organisation, yet it engages with national government and municipalities on behalf of all creative and cultural industries. The general consensus from the engagement was that this body was taking on the mandate of the Art and Culture offices across municipalities and that this body had the potential to have detrimental effects for artists who are not invited to the forums and artists who are not invited to its forums. It could be an important intervention for the municipality to engage with the CCI practitioners in detail about such initiatives.

12.3. Recommendations for SACN

The SACN has played an important role in elevating youth voices in urban development and has provided platforms to empower young people on government processes and structures. As an organisation that has influence in policy making and as a convenor of key partners, the SACN is a key advocacy engine for youth issues. The following recommendations are proposed for the organisation to scale its impact in the youth engagement landscape.

1. Roadshow- How To Engage With Government And Active Citizenship

The SACN has a national presence, which expands the reach of its work to not only be in big cities but also can reach smaller towns, which are important areas of transition and development. The SACN has many historical research outputs that contain valuable information and insights, as well as the State of South African Cities Report, which is released every 5 years aligned to the local government cycle. Data and technology are also being leveraged by the organisation to support decision-making in cities.

As a repository of knowledge and research, and as well as a membership-based organisation of municipalities, the SACN should develop a national roadshow, virtual and physical, with the purpose of:

- Bringing knowledge and insights about cities to people, where they are
- Providing a platform for municipalities to engage their in productive and creative ways

- Bringing youth, municipalities, development agencies, civil society and academia together to share knowledge and experiences for the purpose of improving practice and collaboration.

2. Mapping of youth initiatives across the country

There are plenty of youth-led initiatives across the country that need to be documented, supported and celebrated, as they meet the development objectives of the NDP and IUDF. The SACN as a research organisation, should identify these initiatives through an open call, and document these stories with the purpose of elevating good practice and raising awareness amongst youth of the work of their counterparts in different contexts across the country. This will encourage knowledge sharing, peer to peer learning, partnerships and raise the profile of youth as actors making our communities better places.

3. Convene A Youth Urban Platform

The way youth engagement currently is organised is that it centres the government in all its processes, while in reality, the youth has found it difficult to engage in government-led processes. There is a need to reconfigure how youth engagement is set up, and a community-led approach is recommended. The SACN should support the convening of a youth urban platform, where young people gather to share their ideas and innovations amongst one another, to build up a manifesto that encapsulates their vision for our cities and how they need to be supported in working towards it. This could be presented in different forms (physical and virtual) that represent youth culture (e.g. use of arts, a festival theme, and constructive ideas, technologies etc.) and be staged at suitable venues and through multiple media platforms, led by youth on a regular basis.

This approach will help the youth to set the agenda as a unified force, where their experiences and insights are foregrounded to shape policy and practice. This can also be an accountability platform, where government officials are invited to This approach puts the youth right at the centre, where the government is included in their decisions, rather than the other way around.



figure 15: eThekweni workshop
photo credit: Nondumiso Sibiya

13. CONCLUSION

Out of the recognition that Young people between the ages of 15-35, many of whom live in cities, make up over 35% of South Africa’s population. They are key actors and a critical voice in shaping the cities of the future. Furthermore, the Youth accounts for over 46% of the country’s total unemployment, a significant proportion of which are graduates. Statistics also show that young people are both the main victims and perpetrators of crime and violence. This data was gathered before Covid-19 befell the globe, and realities for young people have since only grown grimmer. At the same time, young people individually or in organised and semi-organised structures, are actively involved in innovation and solutions to problems in their communities. What they experience in turn, is that intersecting hierarchies exclude them from playing a meaningful role in shaping their own futures. Too often, their ideas and contributions fall on deaf ears.

It is not enough that the potential of youth is recognized and acknowledged. Young people must be empowered with the knowledge and skills that unlock their full potentials and enable them to fully

participate in and be contributors to the growth of their cities and society at large. Platforms must be provided where the voices of youth are heard and influence decision-making. Young people must be meaningfully included in governance and technical

processes. As co-creators, they should have a role in the entirety of the development process: from knowledge generation, conceptualisation through to the implementation and assessment of outcomes.



figure 16: eThekweni workshop
photo credit: Thobela Fibi

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