



**The implementation, comprehensiveness, and skills provision of the  
Youth Employment Service (YES) among young Black women  
in Gauteng townships**

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**Keywords:** youth unemployment programme, employment intervention,  
work-experience, employability, job coordination/support

**Declaration:**

The work on which this *minor dissertation* is based, is my original work. Each contribution to and quotation in it from the work(s) of other people has been attributed and has been cited and referenced. Neither the whole work nor any part of this minor dissertation has been submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I have used the *Harvard Referencing Style*.

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## Abstract

South Africa (SA) is currently the most unequal nation in the world among countries with reliable statistics, with some of the highest poverty levels and youth unemployment rates. However, there are various youth employment interventions (YEIs) that have been introduced to address youth unemployment. One of the most recent YEIs is the Youth Employment Service (YES), which is supported by business, the state, and organised labour. YES is a work-experience programme that aims to provide a steppingstone towards sustainable employment.

Research has shown that comprehensive YEIs are more effective and impactful, and skills-providing programmes have been successful in the labour market. Therefore, this paper aims to assess YES and answer the question of how comprehensive it is and what skills it provides for the labour market. This assessment is specifically focused on YES's work-placement programme and not its business development programme.

This paper utilises mixed methods, including purposive sampling of 20 young Black women from low-income communities in Gauteng. While the sample size is small and the findings are not representative, they still provide valuable insights into YES. The primary data was collected through individual mini surveys online (quantitative research) and semi-structured focus group discussions (qualitative research) in person. The data was analysed statistically using descriptive statistics and bivariate regression, and thematically using MS Excel and NVivo.

The paper's findings indicate that the participants require skills and psychosocial support, among other things. It argues for YEIs that meet participants' needs. The study found that YES effectively provides soft skills directly and hard skills indirectly through host companies. The findings show that YES is comprehensive in its approach to supporting and empowering participants, which meets their needs, making YES a youth developmental programme. The paper also argues that YES differs from previous Government-Backed Programmes (GBPs) of YEIs. While YES is an employability, job accessibility and job creation programme like previous GBPs, it is also a job-supporting, job coordination and financial literacy programme, unlike many of the previous GBPs.

The study found that YES does commendable work, such as providing work experience, while trying to contribute to addressing unemployment, a complex issue. However, YES is still in its trial stages and there are some challenges, such as a limited provision of career development. This means that while YES is comprehensive and provides skills, it also needs to be strengthened. The paper recommends that YES develop concrete plans to standardise the programme and provide it to all its applicants, among other ways to strengthen the programme.

## Intshwankathelo

UMzantsi Africa (MA) lelona zwe linoninzi loluntu olungalinganiyo kwihlabathi jikelele. Ukwalelinye lamazwe anabantu abahluphekayo abaninzi. Nangona ililizwe elinenkitha yolutsha, uMA unentswelo-ngqesho yolutsha exakileyo. Ngethemba zininzi iZingenelelo-Ngqesho Zolutsha (ZNZ) eziyilwe ukukhawulelana nalo mba. Esona Singenelelo-Ngqesho Solutsha (SNS) samva nje yi-Youth Employment Service (YES) ngeleboleko, okanye iNkonzo yeNgqesho yoLutsha (NNL) ngelenkobe. INNL ixhaswa ngamashishini, urhulumente nabasebenzi ababumbeneyo. INNL yinkqubo yamava omsebenzi ethembisa ukuba nefuthe ekufumaneni ulutsha umsebenzi wesigxina.

Olu fumaniso-phando luthi iZNZ ezibanzi ziboniswa zinefuthe neziqhamo ezintle, kwaye iinkqubo ezakha izakhono zinempembelelo kurhwebo-ngqesho. *Ibanzi njani na iNNL kwaye zeziphi na izakhono ezidingwa lurhwebo-ngqesho ezakhayo kulutsha?* Eli phepha likhangela iimpendulo zalo mbuzo ngenkqubo yofako-ngqeshweni hayi inkqubo yophuhliso-shishini. Eli phepha livavanya ubibanzi beNNL nezakhono iNNL ezakhayo ngokusebenzisa iindlela-zophando ezixubeneyo. Ngeliphandle, kusetyenziswe ingxalo-mibuzo ekwi-intanethi kumntu ngamnye kunye neengxoxo-ngqwalaselo zamaqela ezibukhokelwarha. Idatha entsha iqokelelwe ngochongo-njongo. Isampuli ibe ngama-20 abasetyhini abatsha abantsundu abaphuma kumakhaya ahlelelekiyo eRhawutini. Incinci isampuli ngoko iziphumo azigubungeli lonke ulutsha kodwa ziyantluvisa ngeNNL. Iziphumo zifunyenwe ngohlalutyo manani (izitatistiki ezichazayo nembono-mbini ngokwenzekayo) kunye nohlalutyo-ngokomxholo, kuncediswa ziinkqubo zekhompuyutha, uMS Excel kunye noNVivo ngokulandelanayo.

Iphepha eli lifumanise ukuba iZNZ ziyadingeka ukukhawulelana nezidingo zabachongwa. Lifumanise iNNL yakha izakhono ngempumelelo, ikakhulu unikezo bucala bezakhono zezandla ziinkampani zogxameso. Iziphumo zithi iNNL ibanzi ngendlela eyenza ngayo, ifezekisa izidingo zabachongwa, ngoko ke inophuhliso-lutsha. Ingxoxo ibonisa ukuba iNNL yahlukile kwezinye iiNkqubo eziXhaswa nguRhulumente (NXR). INNL yinkqubo yokwenza-ngqashoko, yovulo-ngqesho neyonabiso-ngqesho njengeeNXR zeZNZ. INNL yohluka kuzo ngokuba ikwayinkqubo yenxaso-msebenzini, yoqhagamshelo-msebenzini neyemphatho-imali.

Eli phepha ligqibela ngelithi iNNL ibanzi kwaye yakha izakhono zengqondo ngokwayo nkqo yakhe izakhono zezandla bucala kwikhampani esebenza nazo. Le nkqubo idinga ukuqiniswa. Eneneni, uyancomeka umsebenzi weNNL ofana nokupha amava omsebenzi – izama ukuba negalelo njengenye yezisombululo zentswelo-ngqesho yolutsha, umba oyintsumantsumane. Kodwa ke iNNL isekwisigaba solingo, kwaye kukho imiceli-mingeni efana nonqongophalo lweengcebiso ngemikhondo yezemisebenzi. Eli phepha licebisa ngelithi iNNL mayiyile izicwangciso nezikhokelo ezizakuqinisekisa ukuba inkqubo inikezwa ngendlela efanayo kulutsha lonke oluthe lwafaka isicelo sale nkqubo.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

CBD(s)	Central Business District(s)
COE	City of Ekurhuleni
COJ	City of Johannesburg
COT	City of Tshwane
CWP	Community Work Programme
CR	Critical Realism
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programmes
FET	Further Education and Training
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBP	Government-Backed Programme
Ibid	Latin abbreviation, <i>ibidem</i> , translating to 'same source'
ICT	Information, Technology and Communications
ID	Identity Document
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
IYDS	Integrated Youth Development Strategy
LMC	Light manufacturing company
MA	uMzantsi Africa
Nd	No date
NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NMW	National Minimum Wage
NNL	iNkonzo yeNgqesho yoLutsha
Np	No page number
NPC	National Planning Commission
NXR	iNkqubo eXhaswa nguRhulumente
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYP	National Youth Policy
NYS	National Youth Service
SA	South Africa
SABPP	SA Board for People Practices
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SALDRU	South African Labour and Development Research Unit
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMMEs	Small, Medium, and Micro-sized Enterprises
SNS	iSingenelelo-Ngqesho Solutsha
TCC	Telecommunications company
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WIL	Work-integrated learning
YEI	Youth Employment Intervention
YES	Youth Employment Service
YES HQ	YES Headquarters
YUR	Youth Unemployment Rate
ZNZ	iZingenelelo-Ngqesho Zolutsha

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

South Africa (SA) is confronted with numerous development challenges, such as inequality, poverty, and unemployment. In 2015, its Gini index was 0.63 (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). This makes it the most unequal country in the world, among countries with reliable statistics. Over half of South Africans (55.5%) live below the national poverty line (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018), and the official unemployment rate was 27% in 2018 (World Bank, 2019), which are some of the highest poverty levels and unemployment rates in the world. Literature shows that unemployment exacerbates inequality and poverty (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; Treasury, 2019), making research on unemployment crucial in development studies.

Against this background, two thirds of the 58.8 million South Africans in 2019 were under the age of 35 and more than a third of the population were between 15 and 34 years (Stats SA, 2019), indicating that SA has a young population. However, research shows that SA is not fully benefiting from its youth dividend (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). In 2019, the youth unemployment rate (YUR) was 41.5% (Stats SA, 2019; Stats SA, 2020), which is higher than the African and global YURs in 2019 of 10.8% and 13.6%, respectively (ILO, 2019). This high youth unemployment rate in South Africa is an atypical challenge compared to Africa and the rest of the world, which means that South Africa is not fully utilising its abundant resource of a young population. Therefore, it is important to study youth unemployment and its proposed solutions in SA.

Research has shown that youth employment interventions (YEIs) can increase youth's skills development, productivity, job prospects, lifetime earnings, and income potential, while also reducing labour disengagement, dropping out from training and education, job precariousness, and employment that is short-term, contract, or temporary (Boonzaier, 2005; Branson, et al., 2014; Tshabalala, 2014; Branson, et al., 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Mamabolo, 2015; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Branson, et al., 2019; Mngoma, et al., 2020). These interventions indirectly address youth unemployment's accompanying issues, such as youth desperation, potential criminal-activity, potential negative-health-outcomes, depression, use of illicit substances, household violence, political and social disengagement, social discord, social exclusion, and marginalisation (Bray, et al., 2010; Lund, et al., 2013; NYDA, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Mngoma, et al., 2020). These benefits of YEIs highlight the necessity of researching them. My personal history of coming from a female-headed household as a Black person in South Africa motivates me to research the experiences of Black women in YEIs. Therefore, this study centres the experiences of young Black women.

In the past, the SA government has proposed YEIs such as the Extended Public Works Programmes (EPWP), the Community Work Programme (CWP), and the National Youth Service (NYS). These are government-backed programmes (GBPs) that aimed to reduce youth unemployment. EPWP created 400,000 job opportunities and 265,000 jobs (Treasury, 2019). CWP is focused on community service and NYS provides youth with training (Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). However, South Africa's youth unemployment remains very high and has even increased in recent years (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). This is despite the implementation of these GBPs, which have fallen short in reducing youth unemployment. Unsurprisingly, President Ramaphosa (2018) gazetted a new YEI called the Youth Employment Service (YES). This new YEI is the focus of this study.

YES targets unemployed youth aged 18 – 34 years who are collectively called Black, i.e. African, Coloured, and Indian (SABPP, 2018b). It aims to provide these youths with skills and work experience through a business development programme or a work-placement programme (SABPP, 2018b; SAIIA, 2018; YES, 2018). Using mixed methods, this study assesses the comprehensiveness and skills provision of the work-placement programme within YES.

Below, I expand the relevance of this study (§1.1). I then state the objectives of the paper (§1.2) and I detail the structure that the paper takes (§1.3).

## 1.1 Relevance

This is a very interesting topic as global institutions have highlighted the importance of creating youth employment for decades. The 8th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and the 33rd action by the International Labour Organization (ILO) call for governments to reduce youth unemployment (ILO, 2012; SDG, 2015). It is a highly relevant topic as addressing youth unemployment and creating sustainable employment for youths has been one of the key objectives of the South African government since the dawn of democracy in 1994. As a result, several policies and initiatives aimed at creating and promoting youth employment have been implemented. The most recent of these are the National Development Plan (NDP), the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) Act, and the National Youth Policy (NYP). At the time of writing, a new NYP was being drafted.

The NDP paves the way for interventions that will create youth employment and offer youth broader opportunities (NPC, 2012). The NYDA Act mandates the South African government to integrate youth into the economy and society (NYDA, 2015). The NYP of 2015-2020 seeks to create and support YEIs that are inclusive, comprehensive – responding to all aspects or spheres of young people's lives – and skills focused (NPC, 2012; NYDA, 2015). The NYP is driven by these five values: 1) motivation to

support and develop youth's abilities, 2) raising youth's confidence, 3) encouraging youth to be active and productive agents, 4) meeting youth's needs and strengthened youth's networks of support, and 5) encouraging the spirit of Ubuntu (ibid).

However, youth unemployment in the country has reached levels that are now creating political and economic tensions, which in turn are threatening social cohesion (Bray, et al., 2010; Lund, et al., 2013; NYDA, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Mngoma, et al., 2020). With another initiative aimed at promoting youth employment currently being implemented, it is critical to evaluate such an initiative to see if its design is likely to achieve the intended goals. Therefore, the timing of this study is crucial as it contributes to the ongoing policy debate in South Africa.

## 1.2 Objectives

Studies show that youth interventions that are comprehensiveness and provide skills are effective in assisting youth navigate the labour market (ILO, 2012; Branson, et al., 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Branson, et al., 2019). In the face of South Africa's high youth unemployment (De Lannoy, et al., 2018), yet another GBP aimed at promoting youth employment is currently being implemented. Therefore, it is critical to study such an initiative to determine if its design is likely to achieve the desired outcomes. So, the main objective of this study is to assess the comprehensiveness and skills provision of the Youth Employment Service (YES) among young Black women from low-income communities in Gauteng.

Therefore, the research question is, "How comprehensive is the South African Youth Employment Service intervention and what skills does it provide to young Black women from low-income communities in Gauteng?" The sub-questions that aid in answering this research question are:

1. What are the demographics and needs of young people before joining the YES programme?
2. What are the skills provided by YES using the criteria developed from literature?
3. How comprehensive is YES using the criteria developed from literature?
4. How does YES meet youth's needs?
5. How does YES differ from previous GBPs using the six types of YEs in literature?

It is worth noting that the study was conducted before the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

## 1.3 Structure of the study

As seen, on [Chapter 1::](#) I introduced the study and its objectives. Still, to have a landscape of what is already known about the research field, on [Chapter 2::](#) I review the literature on youth unemployment and YEs. I also provide a conceptual and theoretical framework. On [Chapter 3:](#) I detail how I used

quantitative and qualitative (mixed) research methods to collect data using mini surveys and focus group discussions (respectively). I also highlight how I analysed the data using statistical and thematic analysis. From this I obtained results, I present these on [Chapter 4](#): the participants' demographics and the participants' experience of the YES programme. The results are also about the skills provision and the comprehensiveness of the different parts of YES. On [Chapter 5](#): I discuss those results and explain how they answer the research question and its sub-research questions. From this I obtained findings, which are not representative of the entire Black, female, and youth population, because the sample size is small. However, these findings provide insights about the YES intervention. They expand literature and they can be studied further. On [Chapter 6](#): I conclude the study. I bring summaries of the findings, make recommendations, and highlight areas for further research.

The following chapter provides a literature review. It frames this study within already existing scholarship.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The labour market in South Africa (SA) is a challenging place for youth. This literature review will illuminate this further based on already existing scholarships about youth unemployment in South Africa and the experience of young and Black women in the labour market (§2.1). It will describe the challenges that youth face both on the demand and the supply side of the labour market. It will also highlight how the labour market is even more challenging to youth who are Black and female. Then it briefly explores the labour market dynamics for young Black women in Gauteng.

Further the literature review will stress that despite multiple youth employment interventions, youth unemployment is still a great concern in South Africa (§2.2). Then it will introduce the South African Youth Employment Service (YES) which is a government-backed programme (GBP) with the support of unions and the private sector, and the intervention that is the focus of the study. From existing scholarship, the literature review will also pull different aspects of youth employment interventions that are shown to be effective and use these different aspects to come up with criteria to assess YES. The literature review will include the definitions of concepts used in this study such as: Black, women, young among others; and it will end with a theory of youth development (§2.3).

In summary, this literature review firstly explores the labour market in SA and Gauteng, and young Black women's experiences in it. Secondly I look at YEIs and show the need for comprehensiveness and skills provision in YEIs. Thirdly I provide a conceptual framework and a theory of youth development.

### 2.1 Struggles of Black youth in the labour market

On the demand side of the SA labour market, employers perceive youth as inexperienced and therefore lacking skills (Reddy, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Yet most youth are more educated than their parents (Mlatsheni, 2014; Graham, et al., 2016). Youth often struggle even to enter the labour market or to get work-experience (Altman, et al., 2014). The lack of work-experience contributes to youth unemployment in SA (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). There is also little economic growth and little job creation in SA (Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Mlatsheni, 2014). The meagre growth seen in the past decade accompanied high youth unemployment and lay-offs in sectors that traditionally absorb low-skilled workers (like youth) in large sums, e.g. agriculture (Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Youth are more vulnerable because they join workers that are more experienced (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016). They are the first and the most to be laid-off, and the last and the least absorbed (Graham, et al., 2016; Mkhize, 2018). For reasons beyond

youth's control, there is little demand for youth in the labour market or enough incentives to retain them. Therefore, this paper focuses on the experiences of youth.

On the supply side of the SA labour market, youth are motivated but they have limited or ineffective job-searching strategies; they have little to no social capital that can provide information and help secure employment; and they are poorly trained and ill-prepared by the education system for the jobs that the economy has and Black youth, and youth from poorer households (Mlatsheni, 2014; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Graham, et al., 2019). More educated youth are more likely to be employed and earn more (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Yet, high dropout rates before and in matric, and too few young people enrolling for post-schooling qualifications (Branson, et al., 2014; Reddy, et al., 2016; Branson, et al., 2019), mean that many youths are out of school as low-skilled workers. With the SA economy increasingly creating high-skilled jobs (Mlatsheni, 2014; Mkhize, 2018; De Lannoy, et al., 2018), there is a skills mismatch in the SA labour market. Whether it is outside or within youth's control, it is clear that youth lack skills needed in the labour market and that is why skills provision is central in this study.

Young women and Black youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment compared to their age, race and/or gender counterparts in South Africa (Benya, 2013; Malindi, 2016; Fredericks & Yu, 2018; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; Stats SA, 2020). This gendered and racial dynamic among youth is yet to be fully understood, however. The costs of job-searching are too high for Black youth, e.g. travelling to interviews, CV preparation and searching for information including data costs (Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Social expectations of care also negatively impact women in the labour market (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Malindi, 2019). Notably, women may want and choose to do this caregiving work but some may want to invest their time on seeking employment opportunities or furthering studies to better their livelihoods. This is why, this paper prioritises young Black women.

[Table 1](#) shows that a significant proportion of young women are mothers in Gauteng (25%) and all the metropolises: COE (27%), COJ (24%) and COT (23%) (Youth Explorer, 2016). (Data about young mothers in the Gauteng townships was unavailable.) Further, young women are disproportionately unemployed in the province and all the townships. Gauteng has the same proportion (32% each) of Nguni (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, IsiNdebele and Siswati) speakers and Sotho-Tswana (Sepedi, Setswana, and Sesotho) speakers. Alexandra and Soweto have more Nguni speakers (48% and 40% respectively) than Sotho-Tswana speakers (32% and 37% respectively). Soshanguve and Tembisa have more Sotho-

Tswana speakers (52% and 42% respectively) than Nguni speakers (23% and 35% respectively). I shall aim to have similar proportions of representation of mothers and language groups in the study.

*Table 1: Socioeconomic status of youth (15-35) in Gauteng and its townships, data from (Youth Explorer, 2020).*

Province, Township (Metropole)	Population and type of households	Unemployment and household income average	Home Languages		Education level
<b>Gauteng</b>	5,002,608: 83% Black; 49% Female; 25% mothers* Formal 81%; Informal (back-yard) 7%; Informal (non-backyard) 10%; Other 1%	33% Official (of which 55% are Female*) 40% Expanded 35% Poor Monthly* R2,450	IsiZulu 20% Sepedi 12% Sesotho 11% English 11% Afrikaans 10% Setswana 9%	Xitsonga 8% IsiXhosa 7% Ndebele 4% Tshivenda 3% Siswati 1% Other 4%	40% Less than matric 45% Matric 15% tertiary
<b>Tembisa, Ekurhuleni (COE)</b>	228,016: 99% Black; 45% Female; 27% Mothers* Formal 76%; Informal (back-yard) 10%; Informal (non-backyard) 12% Other 1%	40% Official (of which 58% are Female*) 46% Expanded 37% Poor Monthly* R2,450	Sepedi 34% Zulu 20% Xitsonga 15% IsiXhosa 7% Sesotho 5% IsiNdebele 4%	Tshivenda 4% Setswana 3% Siswati 2% English 2% Afrikaans 0% Other 3%	43% - Less than matric 50% Matric 7% Tertiary
<b>Soweto, Johannesburg (COJ)</b>	525,820: 99% Black; 49% Female; 24% Mothers* Formal 87%; Informal (back-yard) 8%; Informal (non-backyard) 4% Other 1%	44% Official (of which 58% are Female*) 51% Expanded 43% Poor Monthly* R2,450	Zulu 36% Sesotho 15% Setswana 12% Xitsonga 10% IsiXhosa 9% Sepedi 5% Tshivenda 5%	IsiNdebele 2% English 2% Siswati 1% Afrikaans 1% Other 2%	39% - Less than matric 53% Matric 8% Tertiary
<b>Alexandra, Johannesburg (COJ)</b>	82,436: 99% Black; 47% Female; 24% mothers* Formal 74%; Informal (back-yard) 9%; Informal (non-backyard) 15%; Other 2%	39% Official (of which 51% are Female*) 45% Expanded 38% Poor Monthly* R2,450	Zulu 26% Sepedi 23% Xitsonga 12% IsiXhosa 10% Setswana 8% Sesotho 6% Tshivenda 5%	IsiNdebele 3% English 2% Siswati 1% Afrikaans 1% Other 1%	45% Less than matric 55% Matric 5% tertiary
<b>Soshanguve, Tshwane (COT)</b>	161,614: 99% Black; 50% Female; 23% mothers* Formal 76%; Informal (back-yard) 7%; Informal (non-backyard) 15%; Other 1%	47% Official (of which 53% are Female*) 56% Expanded 47% Poor Monthly* R4,775	Sepedi 28% Setswana 16% Xitsonga 16% Zulu 13% Sesotho 8% IsiNdebele 6% Tshivenda 3%	IsiXhosa 2% Siswati 2% English 2% Afrikaans 1% Other 3%	33% Less than matric 48% Matric 9% tertiary

[Table 1](#) also reveals that youth unemployment is high in Gauteng (33%) but higher in the townships: Soweto in the City of Johannesburg (COJ) (44%), Alexandra in COJ (39%), Soshanguve in the City of Tshwane (COT) (47%) and Tembisa in the City of Ekurhuleni (COE) (40%). According to the earlier Youth Explorer (2016), all the townships have higher poverty rates (37% in Tembisa, 38% in Alexandra, 43% in Soweto and 47% in Soshanguve) than the province (35%) as measured by Stats SA's 2015 upper-bound poverty line of R779 per person per month in 2011 prices. In the province and in all the townships, most of the youth have completed matric (Grade 12). The townships have a less

percentage of youth who have some post-matric/ tertiary education than the province (15%), i.e. Alexandra (5%), Tembisa (7%), Soweto (8%) and Soshanguve (9%). The history of apartheid has resulted in townships – where urban Black people were forced to live – having high levels of unemployment and poverty, lack of opportunities, and lack of productive social capital, which still determine labour market outcomes (Bray, et al., 2010). However, rural areas are worse off than townships, however (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). This clearly suggests that geographic location is correlated with socioeconomic advantage. That is, townships are less fortunate and rural areas are even more worse off. However, townships are relatively more accessible in Gauteng than rural areas. This is why townships are selected as the site of the study.

## 2.2 Youth employment interventions

Employment is shown to be central in poverty reduction (Altman, et al., 2014) and combating inequality (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). As the literature above shows the high levels of inequality and poverty observed in the country, and the importance of centring youth, SA tackling youth unemployment may decrease both inequality and poverty. So, youth employment interventions (YEIs) may be youth developmental programmes. Graham *et al.* (2016) mentions four types of YEIs:

1. *Employability programmes*: increase workers' skills and worker's appeal to employers. These are already established above as important in the fight against youth unemployment.
2. *Job creation programmes*: stimulate demand for workers using many tools and mechanisms e.g. state subsidies to employers hiring youth, tax-credits etc.
3. *Job accessibility programmes*: remove barriers to the labour market, including social ones, by making it easier for workers to find work.
4. *Financial literacy programmes*: encourage workers to save and improve financial inclusion.

De Lannoy et al. speak of supporting programmes (2018) and Mai (2014) writes about a coordination programme. Building on this literature, I define the fifth and sixth type of YEIs:

5. *Job-supporting programmes*: provide workers support to increase their productivity e.g. psychosocial support, health-interventions, provision of childcare etc. for workers.
6. *Job coordination programmes*: connect workers with appropriate people and institutions that will be beneficial to them in the labour market.

### 2.2.1 Lessons from previous youth employment interventions

The many government-backed programmes (GBPs) of YEIs in SA include public employment programmes like the Extended Public Works Programmes (EPWP) and Community Work Programme (CWP). The EPWP created 400,000 job opportunities and 265,000 jobs but it did not prioritise women as only 100,000 of its jobs went to women (Treasury, 2019). The CWP is like the EPWP but it focused on community service (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Another GBP is the National Youth Service (NYS),

which is a volunteering programme that provides youth with training (Graham, et al., 2016). This paper focuses only on these three GBPs – CWP, EPWP and NYS – and refers to them “as previous GBPs”.

Previous GBPs aimed to reduce youth unemployment rates (YURs). [Figure 1](#) indicates that YURs for youth (in different age bands) have remained stubbornly high over time, from 2008 (just after the global economic crisis) to the end of 2018, with younger people (15 to 24) being the most impacted. This all supports what De Lannoy *et al.* (2018) found that YURs have consistently remained high despite a plethora of YEIs introduced to address it. So, clearly, more needs to be done. Simply having YEIs is simply not enough. More YEIs are perhaps needed. Importantly, YEIs need to learn from previous ones what works and what does not and build from that.

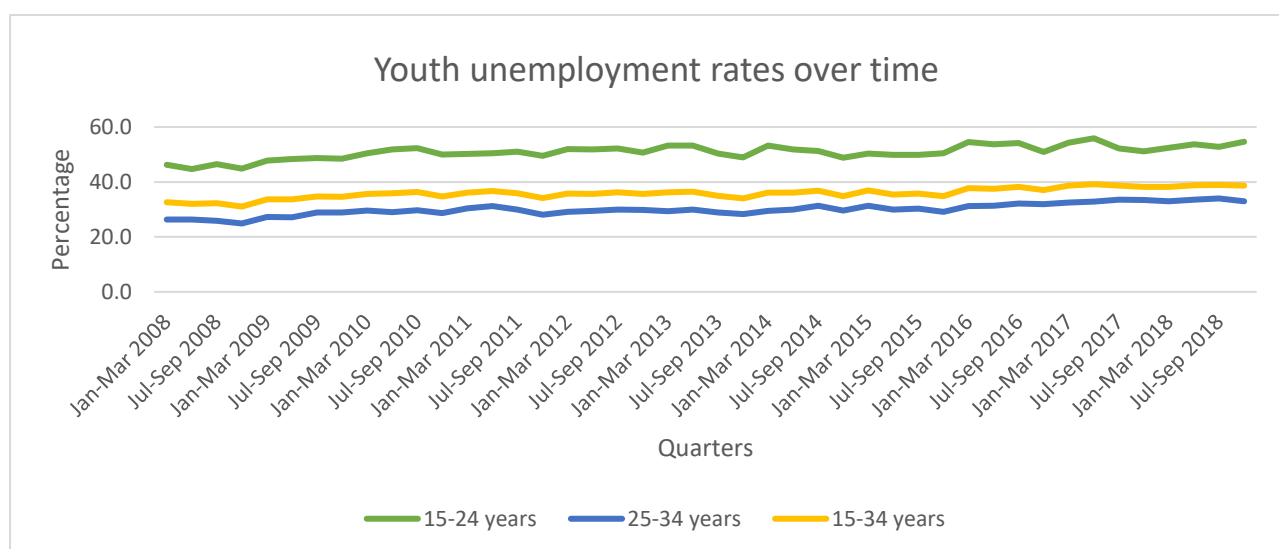


Figure 1: Youth unemployment rates, for different age bands, own calculations using the QLFS from Stats SA.

For many of the existing interventions, there is no understanding or insufficient evidence on the way in which young people experience their various parts (Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). That is why this study seeks to understand the various parts of the Youth Employment Service (YES) programme. Also, the EPWP and CWP have been criticised for not providing enough skills to young people, e.g. not developing entrepreneurial skills and not preparing youth for jobs in SA (ibid). They are temporary employers (ibid). They are limited employability programmes and limited job creation programmes. Among other things, this paper wants to see if this is also the case for YES.

Literature suggests that young people need comprehensive support and guidance to transition successfully into the labour market (ILO, 2012; Branson, et al., 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Branson, et al., 2019). YEIs that address multiple needs of youth in a comprehensive way are shown to be more successful (Graham, et al., 2016). De Lannoy *et al.* (2018) found that the more comprehensive a YEI was in supporting youth, i.e. “from training

through to placement and on-the-job supporting” (p.50) the more successful it was. So, comprehensive YEIs that meet youth’s needs through support, guidance and training during placement are ideal.

An interesting YEI internationally is the European Union’s Youth Guarantee (EU-YG). Unlike YES, which is targeted at unemployed youth who are under 35 years, the EU-YG is meant to address the needs of NEETs under 25 years (Mai, 2014). The EU-YG is a coordinated intervention that connects young people with the appropriate people and institutions, based on NEETs’ needs and desires (ibid). This could be connecting them to the labour market, education system, healthcare system (mental or physical health) or any other system. That is, it is comprehensive or it responds to all aspects or spheres of young people’s lives. This comprehensiveness is what makes this YEI interesting to this study. Note, Mlatsheni (2014) calls for similar coordination in YEIs in SA. So, the need for coordination is already identified in SA scholarship. However, there is little to no evidence that the EPWP, CWP and NYS have such coordination (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). I am interested in finding out if YES has it. The lessons from all these abovementioned programmes are that there is a need for greater skills provisions, skills relevant for the labour market, and more comprehensiveness and coordination. President Ramaphosa (2018) gazetted the latest GBP which is called the Youth Employment Service (YES). This study focuses on YES. It seeks to assess if YES is comprehensive and if it provides skills.

### *2.2.2 The Youth Employment Service (YES)*

YES is a national YEI that targets youth who are 18 – 34 years old (SABPP, 2018b). The youth must be unemployed for at least 6 months and be Black South Africans (i.e. African, Coloured, or Indian) (ibid). YES is being piloted in Gauteng (ibid). To be part of YES, youth must sign up online, go to any of the YES hubs (currently in Tembisa and another is being established in Alexandra) or go to the YES offices (e.g. there is one in Springs). YES (2018) claims to be driven by business with the full support of the state and organised labour.

YES’s objective is to support and integrate unemployed youth into the labour market (YES, 2018; SAIIA, 2018). YES aims to provide skills, experience, connections, and references that may help youth secure sustainable employment (SABPP, 2018b). YES aims to provide work-readiness skills and on-the-job training (YES, 2018). Based on the needs and desires of the young person, YES claims to place youth or temporarily integrate youth’s businesses to established businesses’ supply chains (SAIIA, 2018). The former I define as the work-placement programme and the latter as the business development programme. This study focuses on the work-placement programme.

Hosts are where youth experience the intervention. Sponsors pay for a youth to be part of the intervention. The average annual costs to sponsor a youth is R55 000 per annum (SABPP, 2018b). Businesses can be hosts or sponsors of youth (SAIIA, 2018). They can be a corporate or a Small, Medium, and Micro-sized Enterprise (SMME). Youth who are part of the work-placement programme receive the National Minimum Wage of R3500 a month (YES, 2018). The study will focus on the experiences of youth, particularly young Black women, instead of the businesses.

The implementation stages of the programmes, according to YES (2018), are as follows:

1. Youth sign up for the programme.
2. Unemployed youth are asked to commit to YES values which are: hard work, commitment, and integrity. Youth are told that YES does not guarantee a job. It is the businesses involved in the programmes who select or hire youth. YES simply screens youth to ensure that youth are linked to appropriate businesses.
3. Youth receive work-readiness materials and prepare for their interviews.
4. After youth pass interviews, they sign a plan of action and set goals for the experience.
5. YES places youth to the host businesses, where youth are integrated into the business's processes e.g. Human Resources.

According to SABPP (2018b), the five stages of the programme after a youth is placed are:

1. Induction: youth sign a contract with the host business.
2. Work-placement programme agreement: youth get a detailed list of their responsibilities and the benefits (including development opportunities). YES claims to encourage businesses to expose youth to different aspects of the company to develop a variety of youth's skills.
3. Keeping a Portfolio of Evidence: youth can use it in the future to prove their competencies.
4. Mentoring and coaching: a qualified person in the business imparts values and skills to youth.
5. Guidance: at the end of the work-placement programme where there is a discussion of where the youth is going after the work-placement programme.

The study will explore if indeed this is what happens within the YES work-placement programme. these claims made by YES. Primarily I will use all the abovementioned points in this literature review and more evidence from scholarship to develop criteria to assess the comprehensiveness and skills provision of the work-placement programme at YES.

### *2.2.3 Developing the criteria for comprehensiveness and skills provision*

Evidence highlights the need for: career development, options to go back to school or rewrite matric, academic support (or extended programmes of study in post-school), psychosocial support and mentoring in order to strengthen skills transfer and acquisition – especially numeracy and literacy (ILO, 2012; Branson, et al., 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Branson, et al., 2019). Coordination among private sector, civil society, unions, national

youth bodies and relevant government departments (e.g. the Department of Labour and the Department of Education) is also recommended (Mlatsheni, 2014). Business connected interventions are shown to be impactful (Mlatsheni, 2014). These are features that YEIs must have if they are evidence-based.

There is evidence that interventions which are work-experience focused are effective (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Mlatsheni (2014) explains that they must be considered a steppingstone to more secured employment. Also, work-integrated learning (WIL) partnerships help youth to maintain contact with the workplace and have great potential despite challenges about their quality (Mlatsheni, 2014; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Additionally, literature shows that YEIs that provide skills have greater impact (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). This includes soft skills: self-esteem, communication, literacy, numeracy, computer, work-readiness (conduct etc), working as an individual and in teams, job-searching skills, seeking information, CV preparation and updating, interviewing, and networking (Graham, et al., 2016). Technological skills and re-training are recommended to ensure youth’s survival in a technologically orientated and ever-changing world of work (Mlatsheni, 2014). A reference letter increases the chances of young people obtaining a job (Abel, et al., 2017). Perhaps through WIL, YEIs that provide work-experience, skills, and a reference letter may be useful, therefore.

[Table 2](#) provides a summary of the skills identified as important for YEIs in the literature above. I will use it to assess if YES’s skills provision is 1) ineffective 2) needs improvement or 3) effective.

*Table 2: Skills criteria.*

Hard/Technical skills training	• basic numeracy (incl. financial literacy)
• Work-integrated learning	• computer literacy
• technological skills	• work-readiness training
• re-training	• workplace conduct
Soft skills training:	• working as an individual and in teams
• self-esteem	• Job-searching skills
• communication skills	○ how to effectively look for job
• Networking or socialising skills.	○ how to apply for a job
• basic literacy	• interviewing skills

Similarly, [Table 3Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.](#) below provides a summary of the features that make YEIs comprehensive. I will use it to assess if different aspects of YES are 1) limited in comprehensiveness, 2) somewhat comprehensive, or 3) comprehensive.

Table 3: *Comprehensiveness criteria.*

Provide career development	Connection to education system
Provide mentorship	• Primary
Provide psychosocial support	• Secondary (return to school or rewrite matric)
Provide some social capital	• Tertiary
Provide work-experience	○ Universities
Reduce cost of job-searching, e.g. cost of travelling to interviews, data costs etc	○ university of technology
Link different departments and different sectors (private sector, government etc.)	• Other
	○ FET or TVET college
	○ Apprenticeships or Learnership

The next section presents the conceptual and theoretical framework. It defines the key concepts used in this paper and provides the theoretical foundation for the research.

## 2.3 Conceptual and theoretical framework

### 2.3.1 Youth, blackness, and gender

Young Black women in SA experience marginalisation in the labour market based on three things.

1) Their **youth-hood** which is a socially constructed stage between childhood and adulthood (Flanagan & Syvertsen, 2006; Oduwole, 2015). Childhood is the state of being dependent (financially or otherwise) to parents or parental guardians (Honwana, 2014a). Adulthood is a state of being independent from parents (ibid). Internationally, youth are people aged 15 – 24 years (ILO, 2013). In SA, it is people aged 15 to 34 years (SABPP, 2018a; Stats SA, 2019). This construct has real life consequences in that it determines how society views and treats youth. This paper uses the South African definition for youth. The traditional understanding, generally seen in Western theory, of youth transitions is that to move from childhood to adulthood youth must move successfully through the education system into the labour market (Bynner, 2005). Transitions from childhood to adulthood have become more complex and less straightforward worldwide (Bynner, 2005). Honwana (2014b) found youth in Africa are socially seen neither as children (because of age) nor as adults (because of persistent dependency). Bray *et al.* (2010, pp. 40-41) observed in SA, “There is no neat movement from school to work, from financial dependence to independence or from living with parents to marriage and parenthood of one’s own.”. A useful concept to explain this is Honwana’s (2014b) ‘waitthood’: a state of not transitioning successfully and fully from childhood to adulthood.

2) Their **Blackness** which is another social construct that was used to discriminate against Black people during colonisation and apartheid (Du Bois & Eaton, 1899; Magubane, 1979; Magubane, 2007). Many legacies of this persist in post-apartheid SA. This is particularly evident in the worse economic outcomes that Black youth experience in the labour market (Bray, et al., 2010). Black officially includes Africans, Coloureds, and Indians in SA (SABPP, 2018a; Stats SA, 2019). In this paper, Black refers only to Africans.

3) Their **gender** which is a social construct that results in the discrimination against women in patriarchal societies, i.e. societies where men dominate and control institutions (including political, economic, social, and religious ones) (Moffett, 2008). Gender has real life consequences with men being afforded more power, rewards, and freedoms than women in patriarchal societies (Moffett, 2008). Apartheid SA discriminated against women in the labour market, pushing them to look after families (Bray, et al., 2010), for Black women that meant being left to raise children in rural areas. Internationally, women have responded to patriarchal subjugation by forming ‘feminist solidarity’, i.e.

organisations and informal support groups for each other (hooks, 1986). In South Africa, this was seen in stokvels, saving schemes formed by a group of people (typically women) (Hassim, 1991). This is also seen in umanyano, i.e. church groups formed by women for women (Ngcobozi, 2020). One place where the political consequences of gender can be observed is in the care economy (explored below).

### 2.3.2 Care

Tronto (1994) defines **care** as an activity done daily for others and has 4 stages. 1) Recognition of a need is *caring about*. 2) Being responsible to meet the need is *taking care of*. 3) Personally meeting the need is *care giving*. 4) Having your needs met is *care receiving*. Care is gendered. In SA, both men and women ‘care about’ – and ‘take care of’ (e.g. getting a job to ensure financial provision) – their families, communities and causes that are close to their hearts (Urdang, 2006; Shefer, 2014; Helman & Ratele, 2016). Women are socially expected to ‘give care’ (e.g. feed, cook, clothe, wash, fetch wood or water etc.) for children, men, sickly relatives, differently abled people or elderly people in their families and communities (Shefer, 2014). This responsibility is hardly placed on men’s shoulders, who are simply expected to have jobs (Helman & Ratele, 2016). Women are caregivers even when they have jobs (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). This care work is underpaid, even when it is outsourced to domestic workers (Kwele, et al., 2015). Typically, to ‘receive care’ is the prerogative of men regardless of their age, health status, ability etc. (Helman & Ratele, 2016). However, society hardly affords women the privilege to receive care unless they are a child, sick, differently abled, or elderly. Even in such cases, it is other women that will most likely provide care. This shows that women carry the double burdens of engaging in paid labour (employment) and unpaid labour (social responsibilities).

I define racialised care as what is often referred to as ‘Black tax’ in SA. It is when employed Black people, unlike white counterparts, have the financial responsibility to support relatives in need (Mhlongo, 2019; Msibi, 2020). However this reduces Black tax to the ‘taking care of’ stage. I view racialised care broadly as also encompassing Black people giving care to white people. This is seen among domestic workers, ‘garden-boys’ or gardener and other care workers like nannies in SA (Kwele, et al., 2015). Outside of the history of colonialism and white supremacy, there is no racialised care. However, gendered care has been in existence in patriarchal societies since time immemorial.

### 2.3.3 Structure and agency

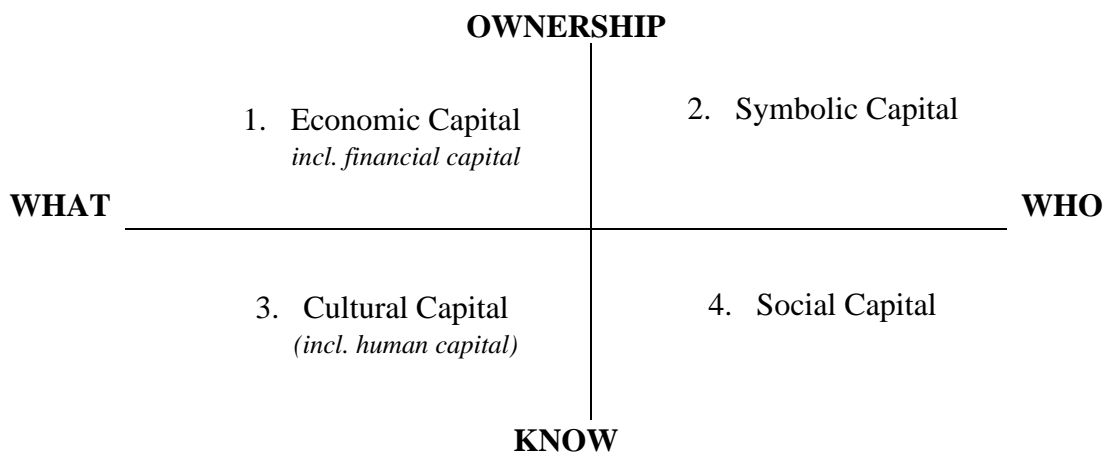
**Structure** is a set of appropriate beliefs or boundaries that govern social life (Carter & New, 2004), e.g. religion. This is a useful concept to understand and differentiate the things these young Black women have control over in their lives and the things that are outside of their control, so that interventions can be more targeted. Structure may exist before people’s birth and can outlive them.

Structures allow some people to thrive (enabling structures) but hinder others (disabling structures). This concept is particularly useful to differentiate between a conducive environment that needs to be fostered and an inhibiting environment that requires interventions.

**Agency** is the ability to choose (Carter & New, 2004). Agents have thoughts, feelings, intentions, reflexivity etc. This concept helps to bring to the fore the importance of these young people’s individual traits in ensuring that good traits are encouraged and rewarded, and impeding traits are mitigated against. Agents can construct structures (powerful agents) and can transcend structures (motivated agents). Structure and agency are complementary. It is important to understand these concepts because social life is interwoven, and it is important to see when these young Black women are using their choices to create conducive or even inhibiting environments and when they make choices that may overcome structures.

### 2.3.4 *Forms of capital*

Bourdieu (1985) defined four forms of capital that are useful in helping to understand social phenomenon. [Figure 2](#) maps out these forms of capital on a two-dimensional axis.



*Figure 2: Axis of different forms of capital.*

**Economic capital** is *what* you *own*, narrowly understood as *financial capital* (or having money).

**Symbolic capital** is *who* you *own* yourself as to people e.g. respect for others, self-confidence etc.

**Cultural capital** is *what* you *know* that favour you to a dominant group e.g. cultures, languages etc. Cultural capital includes *human capital* (the level of skills acquired).

**Social capital** is *who* you *know* which can work to your advantage. *Productive social capital* is useful networks (Graham, et al., 2019). *Bonding social capital* is networks between individuals of the same social class (Claridge, 2018). *Bridging social capital* is networks between individuals of different

social classes (ibid). *Linking social capital* is bridging social capital between individuals and powerful institutions (ibid).

It is worth noting that nepotism arises from *linking social capital* that lacks forms of control and accountability (ibid). Nepotism is also seen as *negative social capital*, i.e. a system that encourages distribution of resources exclusively among elites, grows inequality between elites and citizens, and is maintained by a culture of silence (Baquero, 2015). In this study, the participants can have a) weak (quality) or little (quantity), b) some, or c) strong (quality) or large (quantity) symbolic (or economic, financial, cultural, human, social) capital.

**Employability** refers to “skills and attributes that make young people more marketable in the workplace and that may assist them to navigate the labour market and workplace more effectively” (Graham, et al., 2016, p. 19). In this study, I used educational level as a proxy for skill. I refer to ‘low-skilled’ youth as those who have below matric, ‘intermediate skilled’ completed only matric and ‘high-skilled’ have some post-matric qualification.

### 2.3.5 Theory of youth development

Sen’s (1999) theory of capabilities aids in how it conceptualises development as freedoms to act in society, the economy and in the political sphere with as much liberty as possible. Adapting this theory, I define **youth development** in this paper as the removal of ‘unfreedoms’ (i.e. constraints in social, economic, and political life) and the expansion of freedoms in youth’s lives. This concretely means that youth development minimises structural barriers for youth as much as possible and maximises youth’s agency as much as possible, for them to achieve whatever they want in society, the economy, and the polity. Importantly, this theory of youth development is drawing from Sen and it does not replace Sen’s concept of capabilities.

### Conclusion of Literature Review

This chapter detailed the struggles that Black youth face in the labour market, such as the lack of skills and work experience, lack of social capital and geographic disadvantage because of growing up in townships. It looked at how Youth Employment Initiatives (YEIs) have attempted to ameliorate those struggles and showed the need for comprehensiveness and skills provision in YEIs. It also introduced the Youth Employment Service (YES) which aims to provide work experience, skills, connections, and a reference letter at the end, which are valuable for youth at the beginning of their journey in the labour market. Finally, all the literature reviewed on YEIs was summarised into two criteria that will be used to assess YES.

The last section explained useful concepts that anchor the study, such as race, social capital etc. These are concepts that are pertinent and will help and clarify the experiences of young Black women in the labour market. The theory of youth development was defined as the elimination of 'unfreedoms' and the expansion of 'freedoms' in youth's lives. This theory will help in the assessment of YES.

The next chapter is the methodology chapter, which explains how data was collected and analysed, and limitations of the study.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

Below, I state my epistemology (§3.1). I detail the research design that I used to ensure the research question was answered scholarly, with rigour and integrity (§3.2). Then I illuminate the decisions I took and the reasons behind them as I sampled (§3.3) participants from which I collected data (§3.4 - §3.5) and analysed that data (§3.6) to answer the research question. I then discuss the limitations of the design (§3.7) and I include a section that considers if this study was conducted ethically (§3.8).

### 3.1 Epistemology

My ontology, which is the assumption I make about the nature of reality, is that of Critical Realism. Thus, the epistemology, the assumptions about what constitute knowledge, informing this study is Critical Realism (CR). This paradigm understands the nature of the world, including the social world, as ‘stratified’, ‘emergent’ and ‘transformational’ (Sayer, 2000). It is stratified into three domains: the empirical, the actual and the real (ibid). For instance, if I observe inequality in a society, the visible markers of such (e.g. different sizes of houses) are in the empirical domain. The other markers which are not visible to the naked eye (e.g. income) reside in the domain of the actual. Events are the phenomena in the realm of the empirical and the actual (ibid). While the causal mechanism for these observations resides in the real domain e.g. racial, gender etc discrimination.

It is ‘emergent’ because reality cannot be reduced but emerges from many components (Carter, 2004). Spheres like the biophysical (nature) and socio-cultural (nurture) can explain social actions and processes. Therefore, social agents’ views, attitudes etc. just like biology are important. It is ‘transformational’ because agents can review structures (enabling or disabling structures) and intentionally decide to accept or change them. Underlying CR is the understanding that as a researcher my concern is not only observing what is visible and not visible, i.e. describing events (in the actual or empirical domain), but it is also surfacing the phenomena behind these events i.e. the real domain (Sayer, 2000).

### 3.2 Research design

To answer the research question and its sub-questions, the study used mixed methods: quantitative and qualitative methods. This is in line with my epistemology of Critical Realism (CR). Since CR has common principles with both positivism and interpretivism, it uses their associated methods of quantitative and qualitative methods respectively, provided these methods surface the underlying causal mechanisms (Sayer, 1992; Manicas, 2010). In this case, the interest was not only finding out the comprehensiveness and skills provided by YES, which was done using the two criteria developed

from literature, but it was also unearthing the underlying relations seen in the data about such comprehensiveness and skills provision.

Quantitative methods are good at answering the ‘what’ questions using statistics and numerical data (Bryman, 1988). In this case, these methods were used to answer sub-questions 1 and 2. They draw measurable and objective conclusions but do not necessarily provide understanding, explanations, and interpretations like qualitative methods (Punch, 2014). On the other hand, qualitative methods are good at answering ‘how’ questions using text and words. In this case, they were used to answer sub-questions 2 to 6. They produce rich and thick but also subjective conclusions and tend to be case centred rather than providing generalisable and replicable conclusions like quantitative methods (Bryman, 1988). Since the data complement each other, conclusions from both data will be more convincing (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Both methods address the methodological weaknesses of each other (ibid). Therefore, combining both methods (i.e. mixed methods) provided a broader perspective and more holistic conclusions.

The specific research design that I used was the Sequential Explanatory Design, which is among many designs found in mixed methods. This is a two-phase design where quantitative data is collected first followed by qualitative data collection (Creswell & Clark, 2017), i.e. sequentially. In this case, individual mini surveys were conducted online to answer sub-questions 1 and 2. Immediately afterwards, I conducted semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs). As a result of this design, the survey instrument was used to surface the demographic and socio-economic data (geographic location, household income, etc.) of the participants, which would have been cumbersome to do for all the participants using the FGDs. The FGDs were used to account for the subjectivities underlying the demographic and socio-economic data (e.g., difficulties of living in a geographic location, struggles at the household level, etc.), which would have been difficult to capture using the survey.

The survey provided participants with privacy to obtain sensitive information, such as income and unemployment, which would not have been possible in FGDs. Since, CR allows one to attribute reality to physically non-observable entities like social capital and agency (Sayer, 1992), I wanted to find out in great detail the needs of youth, such as the lack of productive social capital. I found that qualitative methods were more appropriate than quantitative methods because they allowed participants to describe their social world in their own words. Therefore, this research design allowed me to draw on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, where appropriate.

Another strength of this design is that it is not only driven by the researcher but also the participants (Creswell and Clark, 2017). This is the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and the research units of the study that Mason (2002) speaks of. In fact, there was a point in the study where participants, after the survey was completed and during an FGD, expressed a desire to have individual and separate interviews after the FGDs because they wanted to share sensitive information. I could do this because of the flexibility of the mixed methods design and therefore I gained more data.

### 3.3 Sampling strategy

As a student at the University of Cape Town, based in Cape Town, originally, I planned to sample young Black women from Cape Town for convenience. It would have been less costly and the participants would have been relatively more accessible to me. Additionally, UCT serves this community primarily because it is embedded in it. At the beginning of 2019, I searched for high-ranking contacts at YES who were also located in Cape Town. The only YES-related people I could get hold of were from host companies or implementing partners (i.e. where youth can get more information about YES). I struggled for an additional two months to find directly linked contacts from YES in Cape Town. By May of 2019, I asked the implementing partners to assist me in finding participants for the research. However, they could not divulge youth's information without YES's approval and the youth's consent. It is worth noting that these glitches were partly because this was the very beginning months of the programme. YES was piloting the programme and in addition to this, there were some personnel changes within the organization, with some individuals going on leave or leaving the organization to join other companies. Additionally, I faced some personal challenges during this time. Unfortunately, these circumstances led to miscommunication and missed opportunities.

Finally at the end of September 2019, I found out that the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), where my supervisor is located and where I have worked before, had contacts at YES Head Quarters (HQ). Using these contacts, I sent a research participation request letter to YES HQ (see appendix 1, p.112). After all the official clearance was obtained from both ends, I sent the consent form and the ethics clearance report (both in appendix 2, p.113) and the interview request letter to be forwarded to potential participants (appendix 3, p.115). After months of ironing out the details, YES HQ replied to that letter, suggesting that I conduct the research in Gauteng, where it was more convenient for them. YES expressed that there were constraints at YES in Cape Town and that they had a very limited number of participants in Cape Town and only in a few sectors. YES also communicated that the programme was more well established in Gauteng, particularly Johannesburg,

than in Cape Town. I suspected that there were fewer glitches in the programme in Gauteng. Therefore, I agreed to collect data from the youth in Gauteng. This did not compromise the study or its value. It simply meant shifting the focus to youth in Gauteng, and the insights would be useful for the programme in Gauteng.

Due to the confidentiality agreement between YES and youth prevented me from accessing the YES database to do random sampling. Therefore, I chose to conduct purposive sampling, specifically purposive maximum variation sampling, which would provide a wide variety of perspectives and insights that speak both to the general YES intervention and specific sectors within the intervention for similar groups of youth (Creswell and Clark, 2017). This sampling technique is convenient, easy to use, and cost-effective. It allowed me to sample participants who met the purpose of the study, i.e. youth, Black, women residing in low-income communities in Gauteng, as described and defined [Chapter 1:](#) and [Chapter 2:](#). An additional criterion was that they needed to have completed at least 9 months of the 12-month YES work-placement programme. I deemed this duration appropriate because YES was piloting the programme, and no participants had finished the programme yet. It was also important to find participants who were suitably equipped to talk authoritatively about the topics of interest (Punch, 2014). I communicated these criteria to YES, and they agreed to find participants who are willing to be part of the study and meet the purpose of the study. Once those participants were identified and a list was handed to me, I sent them a note introducing myself and the study (see appendix 4 in p.[117](#)).

Qualitative inquiry has no prescriptions on the sample size but tends to prefer small sample sizes; quantitative methods, however, prefer larger sample sizes (Punch, 2014). Therefore, I selected a sample size of 20 that I judged was not too large for qualitative inquiry but still not too small for quantitative inquiry. Please note that there was no counterfactual sample. Since the sample is still small, I chose to restrict it to one specific population group, young Black (exclusively African) women from low-income communities in Gauteng, to bring more validity into the findings.

As YES targets Black youth, I sampled 20 young Black women from these youths. 7 participants were hosted by YES Headquarters (HQ), which is part of the NGO sector (i.e. social services), 5 were hosted by a telecommunications company (TCC) in the private sector and 8 were hosted by a light manufacturing company (LMC) in the private sector. Therefore, 12 were in the services industry and 8 were in the manufacturing industry. While 7 were in the NGO sector and 13 were in private sector. Additionally, the young Black women are from low-income communities in Gauteng, specifically townships in Johannesburg (3 from Soweto and 4 from Alexandra), Ekurhuleni (8 from Tembisa),

Tshwane (3 Soshanguve) and 2 from other areas. Although, I tried to have geographical and demographic representation, the numbers were also influenced by the participants who volunteered but the crucial aspect was having all three metropolises in Gauteng represented.

I was fortunate to have YES book private rooms for me to spend an hour and 30 minutes with each sub-sample of young people at all the different host companies. In total, I had five sub-samples of participants: two groups made up of 3 and 4 participants hosted by YES HQ, one group of 5 participants hosted by the TCC, and two groups of 4 participants each hosted by LMC. The FGDs were conducted with these sub-samples.

### 3.4 Type of data and instruments

The study made use of primary data. To collect quantitative data, I created a mini survey on Google Forms (see a snapshot on appendix 5, p.118). The survey was used to capture biographical, demographic, and socio-economic data and to get individual responses that I did not want to be influenced by the group dynamic. The [uncompleted form](#) is available to the public. It allowed me to get all the participants' input on key issues before and during the programme (e.g. confidence levels). It had close-ended questions with multiple-choice answers. This allowed me to have standardised responses from all the participants that I could easily compare. Not only that, but the data collected was immediately captured and stored on the back end of Google. I could view it in an excel format (see a screenshot of the spreadsheet on appendix 6, p.119) and Google Forms represented it as automated graphics (see appendix 7, p.119).

The FGD guide (see appendix 8, p.120) was used to collect qualitative data with open-ended questions such as “What was it like being part of YES?” “How were your aspirations met by YES?” and “How were the skills provided by YES?” This allowed for richer, deep, and nuanced experiences to emerge without the limitations of standardised probabilistic responses found in the surveys (Punch, 2014). The FGDs were conducted face-to-face, and this allowed me the opportunity and ability to read body language and probe participants easily. Conducting FGDs, as compared to conducting individual qualitative interviews, saved time and money. I transcribed the FGDs (see an excerpt in Appendix 9, p.121) with the assistance of audio recordings. I asked for permission to record the FGDs only for the purposes of transcription. I destroyed the recordings after transcription, as I had agreed with the participants. The data is only fully accessible to me, and I anonymised the transcripts and survey data. The anonymised data was made accessible my supervisor, and I asked the participants for permission to make the anonymised data available to the public, which they agreed to on the consent form. Since I spent the entire day with youth at the different host companies, I also made notes outside of the FGDs

(appendix 10, p.121). I did, however, sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) about the organisation's intellectual property or reports I saw. So that data is excluded in this study.

The data was quantitative and qualitative in nature. It was collected at one point in time from the same units of research, i.e. it is cross-sectional data (Mason, 2002; Punch, 2014). This differs from panel data which is collected over a period of time from the same units of research. Although there is some panel analysis, i.e. comparing the 'before YES' and 'while in the YES programme', the data is collected retrospectively. That is the participants were asked to recall a time before joining YES. The rest of the data is collected at a point in time in participants lives, specifically at least 9 months into the programme. Participants had not finished the work-placement programme to talk about life post-YES.

### 3.5 Data Collection

In January 2020, I travelled to Johannesburg, Gauteng, and visited YES HQ in Rosebank. I was introduced to the participants who volunteered to be part of the study. I checked if participants met the sampling criteria. Those who met the criteria were provided with the consent form and survey introductory note. The following day I collected data with the first group of participants placed at YES HQ, and on the third day, I collected data with the second group of participants placed at YES HQ. The logistics of my visit were organised between me and YES such that by the time I visited Johannesburg, I would be able to go with them to different host organisations for the YES quarterly visitations. So, I went with YES to visit the youth hosted at TCC, where I was introduced to the youth there. Some of them volunteered to be part of the study after I explained what it is about. I selected from those youth only participants met the sampling criteria. I gave them the consent form and survey introductory note. Then I collected the data from them later that day.

I also visited the youth placed at LMC. This time I travelled alone to the Tembisa hub. Since, I lived in Gauteng for some time I knew how to navigate my way around the province. At the hub, I met a group of young women who are placed at LMC. I repeated what I did at TCC, collecting the data at the hub, which neighbours LMC. Notably, the data was collected before the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic hit the South African shores. However, the write up was delayed because of being permanently employed while finishing my studies and the already mentioned reasons. That is why the study only considers the pre-Covid era.

In the different groups (or sub-samples), I asked the participants to use their cellphones to complete the online survey. I gave each participant airtime to the value of R50 to buy data so that they could

access the internet. This was also partly to thank them for the time they took to be part of the study. Fortunately, YES provides young people with internet enabled devices, so they could use those if they did not have internet-enabled cellphones. All the participants were technologically savvy. I provided the participants with the survey's hyperlink. They all completed the survey individually without discussing it among each other. It was meant to last 30 minutes, but some participants could not finish the survey after 30 minutes and I allowed them to finish it some other time within the week of data collection. All the participants filled and submitted the survey by the end of the week (Sunday). Then after that, I conducted an FGD with each group that lasted 1 hour. In total, I spent 1 hour and 30 minutes with each group of participants.

### 3.6 Data analysis

Since, I used mixed methods, I made use of both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. I analysed the data from the mini survey and the FGDs separately. Then I combined and compared the insights from both methods in line with my epistemology and research design (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Manica, 2010). I also used electronic aids to analyse the quantitative data (MS Excel) and qualitative data (NVivo). This is acceptable in both research methods (Punch, 2014). Before analysis, I anonymised the participants and anyone they mentioned by name. The names used here are not their real names but aliases.

To analyse the survey data, I used MS Excel to conduct statistical analysis. I coded the survey data into numeric values (where there was none) to prepare for electronic analysis, which is acceptable for quantitative research (Punch, 2014). Then I analysed the data using internally built functions, formulae, and graphics on MS Excel to find descriptive statistics e.g. measures of frequency such as the totals, measure of central tendency such as mean, mode and median, and measure of deviation such as range and standard deviation. I conducted univariate analysis and bivariate analysis to find some inferential statistics (e.g. Pearson's correlation coefficient, scatterplot, bivariate regression analysis, and line of best fit). I also created data visualisations such as pie charts (see [Figure 8](#) in section [4.2.3](#)), tables (see section [4.1.1](#)) and bar graphs (see [Figure 12](#) in section [4.3.2.2](#)).

I analysed the qualitative data using Thematic Analysis, finding common themes within the data and applied them throughout the qualitative data to reach a conclusion based on data, existing literature, and theories (Spencer, et al., 2014), with the aid of NVivo (explained later). Specifically, I used Spencer, et al., (2014)'s Framework:

1. I familiarised myself with the data by reading through the transcripts. In this study, I read the data using all three ways that Mason (2002) highlights:
  - a. Literally, what is on the page because what participants say matters. (using ‘’ to note words lifted from quotations when I am reporting results)
  - b. Interpretively, finding meaning behind the text, since this is my role in the co-construction of meaning to interpret what the participants meant. (This I did mostly in the discussion section)
  - c. Reflexively, reflecting on being part of the co-construction of meaning, e.g. my positionality. (this I did on section [4.5.5](#) for example).
2. I developed an initial Thematic Framework (appendix 11, p.[121](#)) with themes and sub-themes.
3. I indexed and sorted the data by locating where a topic is discussed in the transcripts and theme (or coded) it accordingly (appendix 12, p.[122](#)). I sorted the data cross-sectionally, i.e. I used the same codes (or themes) throughout the qualitative data to compare and find similarities and differences among the participants (Punch, 2014; Mason, 2002). I coded the qualitative data: transcripts (see an example on appendix 13, p.[122](#)), memos (i.e. notes I added to the transcripts) (appendix 14, p.[123](#)) and annotations (clarifications I added to the transcripts) (appendix 15, p.[124](#))
4. I reviewed the data extracts to see where I could reduce or combine codes. This then yielded different levels of coding: first level being the broadest codes, second level had the narrower codes, and third level had the narrowest and most particular codes (appendix 16, p.[124](#)). Comparing and contrasting codes to see out patterns led to the next level until I had the most general codes.
5. Finally, I summarised the data using display tools in a way that does not lose the context, voices, or languages the participants used (appendix 17, p.[126](#)).

From this analysis, I came up with descriptions of ‘what is’ and ‘how that happens’ in the results section (see [Chapter 3:](#)) by making explicit accounts (i.e. inferred by data) more abstract turning them to general implicit accounts (i.e. inferred by me from data) (Mason, 2002; Spencer, et al., 2014). However, there were also attachments to subgroups (Ritchie et al., 2014). For example, the experiences of participants differed based on the industry they were placed in (YES HQ compared to TCC compared to LMC). I then turned these descriptions to explanations by finding patterns and meanings lying behind the results to find out ‘why’ (see [Chapter 4:](#)) and this unearths the causal mechanism that my epistemology seeks (Mason, 2002; Spencer, et al., 2014; Sayer, 2000).

In addition, I made linkages between different descriptions (Ritchie, et al., 2013). For example, I linked youth's needs and YES' skills provision to answer research sub-question 4. I also sought alternative explanations for why things are the way they are in the form of conjectures (Ritchie, et al., 2013) to ensure that all possible explanations were considered.

I located these conjectures in literature and theory ([Chapter 4:](#)) to move away from determinism (conjectures about why things are the way they are) and advance evidence-based conclusions (Spencer, et al., 2014). My intention was either to widen literature and theory (if findings are not already in literature and theory); to deepen it (if they bring a different angle than what is there already) or to confirm or contradict it (Spencer, 2014; Mason, 2002). This gave substantive and insightful findings about participants' experiences based on their responses (Mason, 2002; Manicas, 2010), and allowed me to make rich, nuanced, evidenced-based and contextualised conclusions (Ritchie, et al., 2013; Punch, 2014). Therefore, my conclusions are a combination of explicit accounts, implicit accounts (my understanding), literature, and the concepts and theory used in this study.

Additionally, mixed methods permitted me to use both inductive (associated with qualitative) and deductive (associated with quantitative) reasoning (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Inductive reasoning meant that I gained knowledge by making particular observations first and then reaching a general conclusion based on the data (Bryman, 1988). In fact, this is what I did in [Chapter 3:](#) with my results, in sections [4.2](#) and its subsections. From the data emerged those themes. While deductive reasoning meant that I conducted empirical research according to existing theory and particular empirical predictions were made based on existing general theories using the data (Bryman, 1988). In fact, this what I did in [Chapter 3:](#) with my results, in section [4.1](#) with the correlation and regression analysis, testing theories about skills and income.

As a result of this lengthy, complex, iterative and innovative process of qualitative analysis (Ritchie, et al., 2013), I used NVivo to bring structure but as the researcher I dictated the methods used and conducted the analyses of the data (Punch, 2014). I organised my codes using nodes and included my thoughts, clarification, and notes using memos and annotations. I coded the data, nodes and memos and included annotation as new memos so that I could code them too.

NVivo was useful for organising data, storing, and recalling it. I split data and merged it in ways that using pen and paper (or a word processor) would have made it difficult. For example, I could code the same data to multiple nodes on NVivo without creating a mess; using pen and paper I would need physical copies of that text and then cut and paste it. In a word processor I would need to copy and

paste multiple times, which I may have ended up missing or losing some data. I could recall the data inside nodes with ease and trace its original source. To do this using pen and paper would have required strong organisational and filing skills, writing notes on and around the paper and keeping track of them using highlighters, underlining, and attaching sticky notes. Even if all the data were saved as one file, a word processor would have had multiple comments and used too much formatting like (highlighters, underlining, bold and Italics) on text which would have required again, strong organisational skills to draw any meaningful insights.

The analysis of the qualitative data was made easier at least in terms of visualising the data, storage, structure, and organisation because of NVivo. However, as the researcher I drove the analytical process. Punch (2014) also observed that researchers who use electronic aids, are still in charge of the analysis. This analytical process was not linear but systematic, continuous, and iterative (Spencer, *et al.*, 2014; Mason, 2002). Thematic analysis is not willy-nilly, wishy-washy or guesswork, instead it provides accounts that are founded on data (Punch, 2014). It centres the participants' interpretations of their own social world, without negating that the researcher brings their own interpretations to this world too. Thus, providing co-constructed findings (Mason, 2002).

### 3.7 Limitations of study

Quantitative methods do not sufficiently account for the context and setting, in which data is collected (Bryman, 1988; Creswell and Creswell, 2017), and the researcher drives the data collection almost single-handedly through standardised probabilistic responses. While qualitative methods lack generalisability, give more voice to the participants, and allows the researcher's biases to show themselves in the interpretations (Punch, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Mixed methods were chosen to address the weakness of both methods by allowing for both exploration and statistical analysis in this study to triangulate data, thereby collecting more comprehensive data (numbers and words) and reducing personal biases (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). I used the methods in a complementary approach to ensure that I can elaborate and clarify results from one method by using the other method. That meant having answers for the research question that are more reliable and more valid. This is the triangulation power of mixed methods.

A limitation for my research design (Sequential Explanatory Design) was that it was time consuming and may have been exhausting for the participants, which could have compromised the data collected. I managed this by piloting the instruments to ensure that they both do not take more than two hours combined. In the field this did not happen. As some participants did not complete the survey during the study and had to complete it at home, I cannot be certain if the study took less than two hours, as

my pilot showed. Another disadvantage of the design is that unfortunately, I ran the FGD immediately after the survey. This meant that I could not explore some of the results in the survey in much depth during the FGDs, as I did not have much time to look at the survey results in detail before the FGDs.

The sample size of 20 is too small to be representative of all Black, female and/or youth from the low-income communities in Gauteng; however, the findings will provide some insights, which will be useful to YES and future studies. They can form the basis for further exploration and testing using a large sample. Therefore, the study will have a meaningful contribution about the comprehensiveness and the skills provided by YES to young Black women from the low-income communities in Gauteng. Also, the small sample size limits the generalisability of the results from both instruments. However, the results will be useful in helping move knowledge a step further than where it currently is and assist YES to improve. There was also no counterfactual sample as this was not an evaluation but an assessment of YES. The sampling technique (purposive maximum variation sampling) introduced sampling bias. However, what mitigated against this was that participants volunteered to be part of the study after hearing about it from YES. Therefore, they self-selected, with no influence from me as the researcher. However, I admit that self-selection could mean that the participants who chose to be part of the study either have strong views that they wanted to express or could have felt coerced by YES. The former still has value in research because it could improve the intervention, though in the direction of the extremities. The latter I mitigated against using the consent form (see appendix 2, p.113).

The retrospective data collection has its limits because participants may not recall well the time before joining YES and therefore the data is based on their recollection of that. This gives a glimpse of the state of the situation before participants joined YES but not a fully accurate picture. The online survey was conducted in English. I went to the field fully understanding that youth in South Africa do not speak English as a home language. So, I gave the participants the opportunity to ask me to explain what they did not understand in the survey. I did this in person (that day), via email and via WhatsApp (on the other days). In the FGDs, some participants accepted my offer to respond in isiXhosa, isiZulu, Setswana, and Sesotho. Since I had spent four years studying in Johannesburg (Gauteng) I had acquired some proficiency in these languages, so I could understand the participants and facilitate the discussion in English while allowing participants to respond in their languages. I did not want participants' lack of English proficiency to limit their participation and negatively impact the quality of the data collected, which could jeopardise the validity of my findings.

Using mixed methods, data from both instruments were triangulated to help manage personal bias, increasing the validity (accuracy) and reliability (consistency) of the conclusions (Manicas, 2010;

Punch, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). I answered sub-questions 1, 2 and 3 using data from both the survey and the FGDs. For example, to answer research sub-question 1, which centred on the demographics and requirements of participants, as well as sub-questions 2 and 3, which centred on the skills provided by YES and the comprehensiveness of the YES programme, I gathered data from participants on their background prior to joining YES (retrospective) and their involvement in the programme using surveys. Then, during the FGDs, I asked participants to unpack their beliefs, motivations, fears, attitudes etc. about their backgrounds and needs, and their experience of the programme. To answer sub-questions 4 to 6, I primarily relied on data from the FGDs. Where the data from both instruments was available, I presented and used it to triangulate the results. This allowed for the internal validation of the findings (Bryman, 1988; Punch, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2017), i.e. fact-checking within the same study.

The quantitative results can be easily replicated because of the nature of the data collected and tools of analysis, i.e. it is objective and easily replicated with if the data is available (Punch, 2014). The interpretation and explanations of qualitative findings are not unique; other researchers can come to different conclusions. This limits the replication of the results, which is not the intension of qualitative research (Punch, 2014). Thematic analysis accepts that analysis may be influenced by the researcher's knowledge of the field and further allows these subjective realities in data collection and analysis (Ritchie, et al., 2013). I was not neutral in the collection and analysis of data, the meaning and interpretation of the data but was a co-constructer of meaning with the participants (Mason, 2002). Therefore, as I interpreted the accounts from participants, the meaning unfolded not only based on transcripts, but also on how I interpret them. This introduced researcher bias. However, I reflected on my positionality (see the ethics section [3.8](#)) in the study to mitigate against some of this bias.

To increase credibility, I made use of memos and notes in analysis to guide the reader through my analysis if the reader is interested in that level of detail. This is to ensure that they understand how I arrived at my conclusions and why I interpreted results a certain way. The NVivo file can be made available upon request.

However, good qualitative researchers show great understanding of the field of study and conceptual knowledge, interdisciplinary approach, and exploratory skills (Mason, 2002). Therefore a strong literature review, conceptual and theoretical framework is needed, to make the researcher an 'insider'. I am also an insider because of my positionality as a Black youth in South Africa, although not female. Being an insider is a strength in qualitative research, and I constantly reflected on my positionality to ensure credible results that the reader can follow where they came from (Ritchie, et al., 2013).

Although this strengthened the study, it may have also stifled the findings because I may share the same blind spots as participants and the data may hit too close to home and trigger negative feelings in me which may impact findings.

Another limitation is that I am an outsider from these participants' experiences as a man, and I may not fully appreciate their responses, therefore. This limitation also showed up in the questions I asked about the programme because they did not explicitly ask the participants about their experiences as women. Nonetheless, there were questions in the survey and FGDs that asked about women-related issues, such as motherhood and care-work etc. This blind spot reduced the power of the findings about these young Black women. However, I may bring a fresh perspective in interpreting women's experiences in my analysis, as an outsider who may not share their blind spots. So, my positionality may have been a strength but it was also a limitation. The reader is advised to consider these limitations.

### 3.8 Ethical considerations

I constantly ensured that I was acting ethically as a researcher being guided ethics. Before conducting the study, I obtained ethical clearance from UCT (appendix 2, p.113). As part of the clearance application process, I also developed a consent form (appendix 2, p.113). I asked participants to volunteer and they agreed to be part of the study. Some participants may have felt like they would be punished by YES if they did not choose to be part of the study for whatever reason. I assured participants that this was not the case. I explained voluntary participation and the option to withdraw from the study without punishment or questions asked at any stage of the study. Once participants volunteered, I then explained the consent form to them in detail, line-by-line, before collecting data. I encouraged participants to ask me questions at any time to gain clarity on unfamiliar terms like "anonymity" and they did.

Some participants feared being identified, particularly those placed at TCC. Before I started collecting data, I explained to them confidentiality (keeping sensitive information between researcher and participants) and anonymity (preventing identification of participants in the research by removing names and identifiable information such as anonymising their supervisor's names), and how I would use the data to them. I asked for permission to record the FGDs for purposes of transcription only and to make the anonymised data available to the public. They gave me permission. I took great care not to ask for too much sensitive information from participants, so as not to upset them. The interviews were facilitated in English but ethically, I allowed participants to respond in the language of their choice. I kept excerpts in the transcript in their original language and I translated them in square

brackets to English. The participants were given R50 airtime as way of thanking them for taking the time to be part of the study in addition to giving them access to internet for the survey. This was not to buy or to sway their responses to go anyway and this was made clear to them.

I used primary data from young Black women who are older than 18 years old. Since they are not children, this reduced the risks for ethical violation. The participants and I signed and dated the consent forms once they understood it. I kept signed copies and gave each participant a copy of the consent form. The consent form included contacts of my supervisor and the sociology department as an avenue for airing their grievances should the participants feel any of the ethics in the form were not respected or felt violated. However, even with the ethical clearance and consent form guiding my conduct to ensure I conducted research ethically, I was constantly cognisant of some ethical issues that arose during the study. For example, the young women placed at TCC had concerns about the use of their names (despite being informed prior to the start of interviews that that would not happen). I assured and explained to them what the consent form meant about anonymity. They also expressed concerns about being interviewed in a group rather than individually. So I offered them the opportunity to be interviewed as individuals.

In my proposal, I committed to having an abstract in English and isiXhosa as a start to make the paper more accessible to more audiences. The results from the study, I hope to publish as a working paper. I also hope to publish the findings in English and isiXhosa in national newspapers after the thesis has been marked. It is also my desire to publish the findings in journal articles after the thesis is marked. This is to ensure that the findings are accessible to the academy and the public.

The following chapter furnishes the results of the study. These results offer answers to the research question and its sub-questions.

## Chapter 4: Results

These results will contribute to the existing evidence about YES, including its implementation, comprehensiveness, and skills provision. The results are presented in a structured manner, with each section including results from either the quantitative data (mini survey), qualitative data (focus group discussions), or both for triangulation. This triangulation approach enhances the validity (accuracy) and reliability (consistency) of the results (Manicas, 2010; Punch, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). In this chapter, the themes in the FGDs and statistics from the survey, begin to answer the sub-questions of the study. This chapter is organised into the following sections:

§4.1 Participants context (sub-question 1)

§4.2. Programme implementation (a major theme that came up from the data)

§4.3. Skills provision (sub-question 2)

§4.4. Programme Comprehensiveness (sub-question 3)

§4.5. Programme commendations and shortcomings (sub-question 6)

While these partial answers to sub-questions 1, 2, 3 and 6, are completed in the [Discussion](#) chapter, sub-questions 4 and sub-question 5 are completely answered in the [Discussion](#).

### 4.1 Participants' characteristics, socioeconomic breakdown and needs before YES

This section presents the results of the demographics ([4.1.1](#)), socioeconomic status ([4.1.2](#)), employment status ([4.1.3](#)), care responsibilities ([4.1.4](#)), and aspirations ([4.1.5](#)) of the sample of 20 young Black women from low-income communities in Gauteng. These findings offer insights into the study's sub-question 1: What were the demographics and needs of young people before joining the YES programme?

#### 4.1.1 *Demographic information: getting to know the participants*

Anonymised and allocated pseudonyms alphabetically, the participants have been introduced below with intimate details using data analysed in the FGDs and supplemented by survey data. For more information, please refer to [Appendix 17: Overview results of the participants](#) – [Table 19](#) has key characteristics about each participant .

The following women were placed at the **YES Headquarters (HQ)**:

- Amy, 26, is reserved and completed Grade 12. She lives in a township as an informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage) with 3 dependants. She is a mother.
- Bonnie, 28, is politically active and has a post-Grade 12 qualification. She lives in a township as an informal renter. She is a mother with 3 dependants. Her English is sometimes limited.

- Clara, 23, is perceptive. She has a post-Grade 12 qualification. She lives in a township as a formal renter (flat/ apartment/ shared building) by herself. She has 2 dependants.
- Daisy, 28, talks calmly. She has a post-Grade 12 qualification. She is from a township where she is an informal renter living with 3 people and 2 of whom are her dependants.
- Emily, 25, is reserved but well-informed. She has an honours/BTech or higher degree. She lives in a small dwelling (RDP/ 1-bedroom roomed house) with her 3 dependants, including her child.
- Flora, 31, is composed, has an honours/BTech or higher degree and stays in a suburban area.
- Gloria, 26, is informative. She has an Honours/BTech or higher degree. She lives in a large dwelling (big/ multiple roomed house) with 3 people. She has 4 dependants plus her child.

The following women were placed at the **Telecommunication Company (TCC)**:

- Hannah, 25, is eloquent but apprehensive. She has a post-grade 12 qualification in Human Resources. She lives in a suburban area renting a room in a house.
- Ivy, 30, is very assertive and nonchalant. She has a post-grade 12 qualification in IT. She lives in a township as an informal renter with her 2 children.
- Jane, 26, is slightly timid and easily influenced by Ivy. She has a post-grade 12 qualification in IT. She lives as an informal renter. She is not sure if the area is suburban, rural or a township. She lives with one person. She did not declare the number of dependants she has.
- Kim, 24, is persuasive and poised. She has a post-Grade 12 qualification in Law. She lives in a township as an informal renter with another person. She has more than 5 dependants.
- Lilly, 28, is outspoken and self-assured. She has a post-Grade 12 qualification in Law. She lives in a township as a formal renter and has no dependants.

While at the **Light Manufacturing Company (LMC)**, the following women were placed:

- Mary, 21, is vibrant and childlike. She only completed Grade 12. She lives in a township, a small dwelling, with more than 5 people – 5 of them are her dependants.
- Nancy, 25, is eloquent and gentle. She only completed Grade 12. She lives in a large dwelling in a township, with 3 people. She has 2 dependants.
- Olivia, 27, is introverted and thoughtful. She only completed Grade 12. She lives in a township, a medium dwelling (2-bedroom house), with 5 people. She has more than 5 dependants.
- Pretty, 35, is expressive but struggles to communicate in English. She only completed Grade 10/11. She lives in a township as an informal renter with her 2 children and 2 other dependants.
- Queen, 25, is sensible and self-contained. She only completed Grade 12. She lives in a township, a large dwelling with 1 more person. She has no dependants.
- Rose, 29, is communicative and eager to help. She only completed Grade 10/11. She lives in a township, a small dwelling, with 2 people who are her dependants, including her child.
- Suzie, 28, is bubbly and energetic. She only completed Grade 12. She lives in a township as an informal renter with more than 5 people. She has 4 dependants.
- Tammy, 27, is level-headed and observant. She only completed Grade 12. She lives in a township as an informal renter with 2 people. She has 2 dependants.

So, the participants have diverse personalities and educational attainment. Some commonalities are that they predominantly reside in townships. They have dependants too. A few of the participants are mothers.

Table 4: The age group of the participants before joining YES.

	15-18	19-22	23-26	27-30	31-34	35+	Total
Number of Participants	0	1	9	8	1	1	20

Table 4 shows the participants vary in terms of age. The mean is 27. It is not too distant from the two modes (25, 28) and the median (26). So the distribution is approximately a normal distribution. The range is 15 (i.e. 36–21=15). This is because one participant signed up when she was 34 (December 2018); she was placed when she was 35 (March 2019); I interviewed her when she was 36 (January 2020). The standard deviation is 3.19. The ages spread around the mean age in short distances. There are hardly any outliers.



Figure 3: The geographic location of the participants before joining YES.

As Figure 3 shows, almost all the participants live in townships, except for two. The participants are from (in order of frequency) City of Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg, and City of Tshwane.

Table 5: Type of house participants lived in before joining YES.

	Informal renters	Large dwelling	Small dwelling	Formal renters	Medium dwelling	Informal dwelling
Number of Participants	9	4	3	2	2	0

As see on Table 5, most participants are informal renters (backyard room/room within a house).

Table 6: Marital status of the participants before joining YES.

	Single	In a relationship but not living with partner	Living with partner	Married
Number of Participants	15	2	2	1

Most participants are unmarried with the exception of one participant, as Table 6 shows.

Table 7: Number of individuals living with participants and the number of participants' dependants, before joining YES.

	No one	1	2 or 3	4	More than 4	Don't know
Number of individuals living with	3	5	7	2	3	0
Number of dependants	3	6	6	1	3	1

As seen on [Table 7](#), most of the participants specified living with at least one other person. Almost all the participants have dependants, except for one. The majority have 2 or more dependants.

Table 8: Highest education level achieved by the participants before joining YES.

	Less than Grade 10	Grade 10/ 11 completed	Grade 12 completed	Post-Grade 12/ Post-matric qualification	Postgraduate degree
Number of Participants	0	2	7	7	4

[Table 8](#) demonstrates that most of the participants have completed grade 12 and the majority have tertiary education (a post-Grade 12 qualification or postgraduate degree). The FGDs affirmed these results and showed that some participants had formal post-matric qualification in fields such as Law, Finance, and IT. The participants placed at LMC either have completed Grade 12 or achieved a grade lower than Grade 12; the participants placed at YES HQ have completed Grade 12 but some also have tertiary education; while the participants placed at TCC all have tertiary education. The participants said that they were the first people in their families to have post-matric qualifications.

Table 9: Home languages of the participants before joining YES.

	Xitsonga	Sesotho	Setswana	Tshivenda	Sepedi	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu
Number of Participants	1	1	2	3	4	4	5

All the participants speak African languages, as [Table 9](#) demonstrates. More participants speak Nguni languages (IsiZulu and IsiXhosa) (9 participants) than Sotho-Tswana languages (Sepedi, Setswana, and Sesotho) (7 participants). In the FGDs and the notes I took after the study (see appendix 10, p.121), I deduced that all the participants perfectly understood at least one Nguni language and at least one Sotho-Tswana Language. That is they are multilingual. The quotes I use in this paper, which are multilingual but with English translation in square brackets, support this too.

In conclusion, the demographics of these young Black women show that most participants live in townships, mostly as informal renters, and with at least one other person. Some of the participants are mothers. The majority are unmarried. They mostly have 2 or more dependants. Most of them have completed Grade 12 and the majority have some tertiary education, however, they are often the first graduates in their family. All participants are multilingual understanding, at least one Sotho-Tswana language and at least one Nguni language.

#### 4.1.2 Socio-economic background of participants

Table 10: Total household income received per month before joining YES.

	R 0 - R1,000	R1,000 - R2,499	R2,500 - R4,999	R5,000 - R9,999	R10,000 or more	Don't know
Number of Participants	2	0	9	6	2	1

Most of the households received less than R5,000 pm, as [Table 10](#) shows.

Table 11: Type of household income(s) received per month before joining YES.

	Child Support/ Foster Grant	Wages from a formal job	Income from informal work	Government pension	Money received from someone not living at home	Sale of livestock/ crops	Refuse to answer.
Number of Participants	13	10	8	4	2	1	1

[Table 11](#) shows that most households where the participants come from receive social protection (e.g. child support grant and government pension) and income from work (formal or informal work).

The FGDs detailed the struggles about where participants come from. Daisy expressed with nods from others, “Alex[andra] is poverty-stricken. [...] [So we] Try by all means to have many channels on how to earn an income” This participant links the geographic location and socio-economic struggles. The words ‘many channels on how to earn income’ show that participants’ households seek different sources of income, including employment wages. With agreement from others, Kim echoed similar sentiments, “I come from the very, very, poor area where there’s nothing. The town is far. Everything is far from home.” The use of the word ‘very’ repeatedly stresses how extremely poor the area is. The words ‘there’s nothing’ which are immediately followed by ‘the town is far’ ties the ‘nothingness’ (which can be poverty or a lack of opportunities) to the long distance from town to this area. This implies that the town has everything (e.g. what can alleviate poverty or opportunities) but because the area is far from town, the area cannot access these prospects. So, clearly the participant is linking this inaccessibility of opportunities to the poverty in their area.

Clearly, the participants are from low-income backgrounds and this is a triangulated result.

#### 4.1.3 The participants’ employment circumstances before yes

Table 12: Before YES placement: unemployment state.

	Unemployed	Never had a job	Discouraged	I was employed/ self-employed/ studying
Number of Participants	10	5	4	1

[Table 12](#) shows that most of the participants were unemployed before joining YES. It is worth noting that a significant number of the participants had never been employed before joining YES.

Table 13: Before Yes placement: unemployment term.

	Long term (1 year or more than a year)	Never had a job	Short term (less than a year)	Other
Number of Participants	10	5	4	1

Half of the participants had been unemployed for long term, as seen on [Table 13](#).

Table 14: Before YES placement: work-experience in number of years.

	I have never been employed	Less than a year	1 Year and under 2 years	2 years and under 3 years	3 years and under 5 years
Number of Participants	5	2	9	2	2

Most participants had two years or less work-experience, as [Table 14](#) shows.

Table 15: Before YES placement: total personal income received per month at last job.

	R 0 - R1,000	R1,001 - R2,499	R2,500 - R4,999	R5,000 - R9,999	R10,000 or more
Number of Participants	8	1	6	4	1

[Table 15](#) demonstrates that most of the participants earned at least R2,500 but almost half of them earned below R2,4999 and a significant number of them earned below R1,000.

Correlating the survey results about work-experience, last personal income, and skills level using scatterplot and regressing the results using a line of best fit, for participants before joining YES, against each other revealed some interesting insights. Below I explore these in detail.



Figure 4: Work-experience's (in years) relationship to personal income before joining YES.

As seen on [Figure 4](#), the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is  $\sqrt{0.5101} = 0.7142$ . It indicates a strong positive relationship between experience and income, i.e. the more work-experience participants had the higher their income tended to be, and vice versa. This relationship can be linearly represented and the regression line has the equation:  $Income = 741.58 + 2372.3 Experience$ . That means for any level of experience, you can find its associated income level from this equation. The positive intercept of 741.58 indicates that zero work-experience is associated with R741.58 unearned income. This could

be social assistance, unemployment insurance pay-out or any income that accrues not as a result of having work-experience. This may include the discrepancy of just using the maximum income in the scatterplot. For instance, for the participants who earned between R0 and R1,000, I selected R1,000 as their income; for the last income bracket I used R15,000 as the maximum income. So, before joining YES, every year of work-experience participants gained is expected to add R2,372.3 to their income.

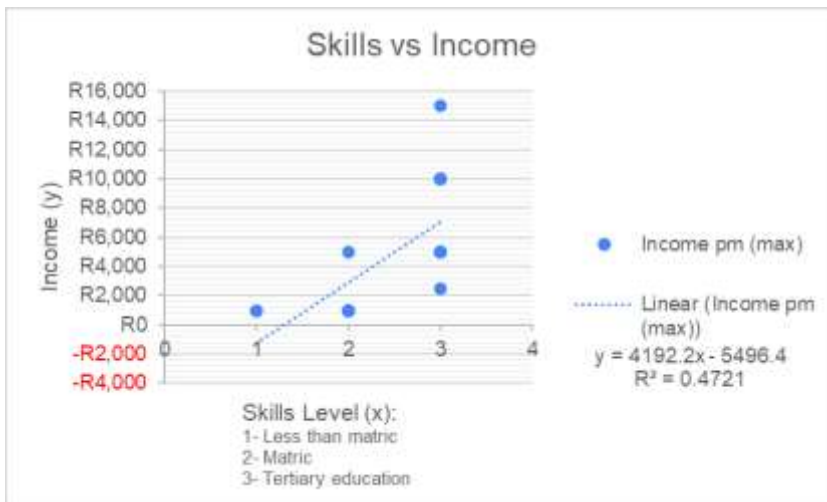


Figure 5: Skills level's relationship to personal income's before joining YES.

On [Figure 5](#),  $r = \sqrt{0.4721} = 0.6871$  and indicates that the more skilled participants tended to have higher incomes and vice versa. The line of best fit is  $Income = -5494.4 + 4192.2 \text{ skill}$ . The negative intercept of -5,494.4 indicates that with zero skills level youth would be expected to need R5,494.4. Among many reasons, this could be their living wage or a result of high-skilled participants who never worked and had no income. So, the positive coefficient for skill means a single increase in skills level (from a grade lower than matric to obtaining matric or from having matric to completing some tertiary education) is expected to add R4,192.2 to participants' income, before joining YES.

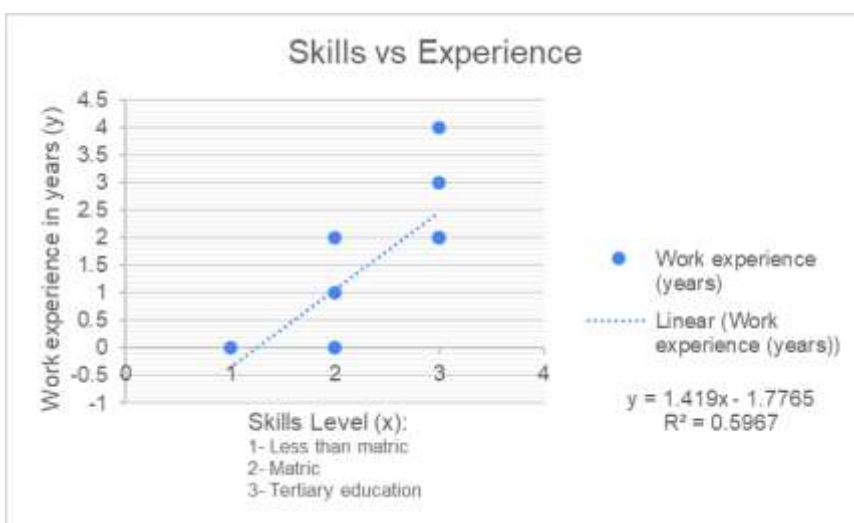
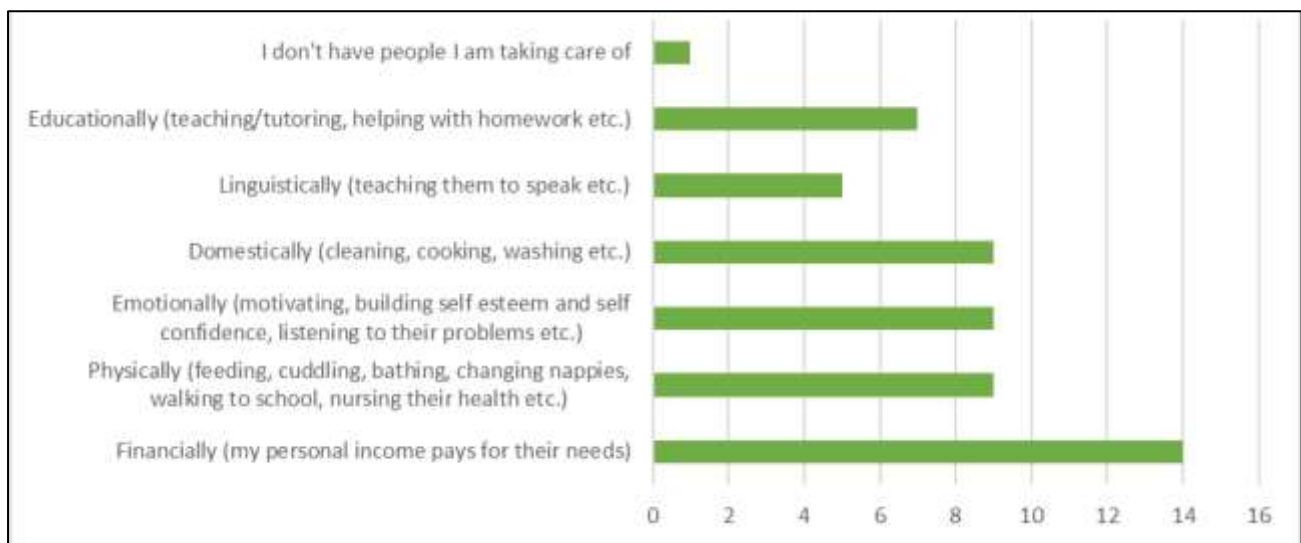


Figure 6: Skills level's relationship to the number of years of work-experience.

In [Figure 6](#)  $r = \sqrt{0.5967} = 0.7724$ , so skills are strongly and positively correlated to experience. The regression line is  $Experience = -1.7765 + 1.419 skills$ . The negative intercept of -1.7765 indicates that with zero skills level participants would be expected to need 1.7765 years of experience. Among many reasons, this could be because high-skilled participants had never worked or had zero work-experience. So, before joining YES, a unit increase in skills level is expected to increase work-experience by 1.419 years.

#### 4.1.4 *Participants' care responsibilities*



*Figure 7: Number of participants providing each of the different types of care.*

[Figure 7](#) demonstrates that participants are providing multiple forms of care. Most participants provide financial care but also emotional support, domestic labour, physical care, educational assistance, and language teaching. The survey results indicated that participants give care to multiple individuals at the same time: their children and relatives' children mostly, but also unemployed relatives, sick and elderly people from their families and communities. Although most participants indicated feeling okay with providing care, some had mixed feelings about it. The FGDs confirmed the survey results that participants are caregivers to their children, among many others, and have many forms of care responsibilities. Participants are expected to contribute (financially or otherwise) to their families. Participants have mixed feelings about providing care: Mary shared, “*It [financially supporting family] is such a blessing. [...] It is painful.*” This illustrates that some participants feel honoured to provide financial care, but it also feels painful or burdensome. They have mixed emotions about giving care.

#### 4.1.5 *The needs of the participants*

In the FGDs, some participants indicated that before joining YES, they wanted to go back to school but for some reason they could not return and joined the YES programme instead. Some participants

only wanted to do a short course. Pretty said, “[When I first came to YES] ngasho ngathi ngifuna ukwenza i-computer course [I said that I want to do a computer course].” The participant clearly articulated her wish to obtain computer literacy skills to YES, but they were placed elsewhere. Also, participants said that they lacked self-esteem and self-confidence before joining YES. They expressed their lack of productive social capital. Bonnie shared “*I don’t have the right connections [that’s why I could not find employment].*” Note that for the participant “the right connections” are connections that can help her get a job. Participants do sometimes think of people who would be useful to connect with, like elected public servants but they felt like they need to know these people personally.

Further, participants seem to differentiate between ‘right connections’, and ‘[wrong] connections’. Daisy said, “*It’s a connection [to know your councillor]!*” She said it like it is a wrong connection. This implies there are ‘right connections’ and wrong connections. Evidently, the latter seems to be confined by the participant to elected public servants or politicians. Bonnie replied,

Furthermore, participants seem to differentiate between ‘right connections’ and ‘[wrong] connections’. Daisy said, ‘*It’s a connection [to know your councillor]!*’ She said it like it is a wrong connection. This implies that there are ‘right connections’ and ‘wrong connections’. Evidently, the latter seems to be confined by the participant to elected public servants or politicians. Bonnie replied,

*It’s not a connection [knowing your councillor]. You have a right to go to a councillor and tell your councillor that you are a youth, and you are unemployed. Please can you [the councillor] do something. You give them [the CV] and that councillor, should be able to do something about that. That’s a councillor’s role, that’s what is according to city laws.*

Bonnie would know ‘a councillor’s role’, she is politically active as I deduced during personal engagements with the participants. Evidently her explanation is that the role of a councillor is unknown to other participants, and she feels it her duty to explain their ‘right’ or rights according to “city laws”. There is, however, a contradiction because while Bonnie possesses this knowledge, she seems not to have used it. In the previous paragraph, she said, ‘she has no right connections’ or perhaps she perceives using politicians to get a job negatively despite her words that it is, in fact, her ‘right’. This interaction overall shows a lack of information prevents participants from using networks in their communities.

Therefore, the participants lacked skills, self-confidence, productive social capital, and information.

#### *4.1.6 Conclusion of section*

This section answered sub-research question 1. It showed that participants before YES emerged from backgrounds which are a melting pot of different ethnic groups. They were socio-economically disadvantaged, as demonstrated by having low household incomes. They have care responsibilities which they have mixed feelings about. Although they have high levels of education, they were unemployed. They lack skills, productive social capital, and information.

## 4.2 Programme implementation according to participants

The results in this section were not the original focus of the study. Soon after conducting the first FGD, the participants made it clear that the programme's implementation was an important aspect to them. Therefore, these results emerged from those discussions mainly and there is little survey data to triangulate them except for the information that participants added in the mini survey as comments. I took this approach because my epistemology is emergent and transformational (Carter, 2004). This allowed participants' voices to be centred because they understand their social world better and are invested in it. Further, Mixed methods support inductive analysis (forming theories from data) and qualitative methods accept participants as co-creators of knowledge (Bryman, 1988; Mason, 2002).

Below, I report on how participants experienced the programme's implementation: founding out about YES and experiencing the recruitment partners (4.2.1), registering for YES (4.2.2), waiting to be placed (4.2.3), being screened for interviews (4.2.4), interviewing for placement (4.2.5), being appointed (4.2.6), signing placement contracts (4.2.7), experiencing the placement (4.2.8) and receiving their portfolio of evidence (4.2.9).

### 4.2.1 *Recruitment and recruitment partners*

In the survey, participants indicated that they found out about YES (in order of commonality): through a friend or relative, recruitment agencies, advertisements in newspapers or on the internet, on the street (i.e. road shows or promotions at taxi ranks, street corners etc.), social media (Facebook and Twitter), former employers, and the launch of YES on TV. FGDs confirmed that participants heard about YES from friends, family, and neighbours, social media (particularly Facebook) and the internet, through promotions in townships or at the YES hubs, and YES information stalls in their townships. Some participants find out about YES from YES's recruitment partners (i.e. on-line job portals): Lulaway (<https://www.lulaway.co.za/>), Giraffe (<https://www.giraffe.co.za/>) and UnlockD (<http://www.unlockd.co.za/site/index>). The recruitment partners' websites show that they recruit for many companies and organisations including YES and each other. These recruitment partners reached out and referred participants to YES for registration. Like YES, they recruit online, on social media and in townships. Unlike YES, they also go to university campuses. Participants explained that YES only outsources the recruitment part but not the other aspects of the programme.

### 4.2.2 *Registration*

In the FGD, the participants indicated that they registered on the YES website, even those who were referred online by recruitment partners or at the partners' offices. However, Olivia came to register at

the YES hub. During sign up, participants were asked for their Curriculum Vitae (CVs), copies of Identity Documents (IDs), and qualifications, among other things, in order to collect their details. Sometimes, this information was indirectly extracted through prompts and questions on the YES website. All of this information is stored in a YES database that is not accessible to the youth.

### 4.2.3 *Waiting for placement*

The survey data shows that the participants waited some time from registration to placement stage. [Figure 8](#) shows that most participants indicated that they were placed by YES either a quarter, 6 months, a year or more than a year after being unemployed. Although this does not tell us how long participants waited from the time they registered with YES, it gives us an indication of how long the process might have taken. The FGDs triangulated some of these results, showing that participants did wait for some time for placement. When asked Bonnie (who is placed at YES HQ) said, “*Unless you have a connection [within YES] I think [it takes about] 5 months [for a youth to be placed].*” So, having a ‘connection’ at YES may reduce the waiting time but the expected waiting time is 5 months. Most participants agreed that it takes about 6 months from the time of registration to placement.

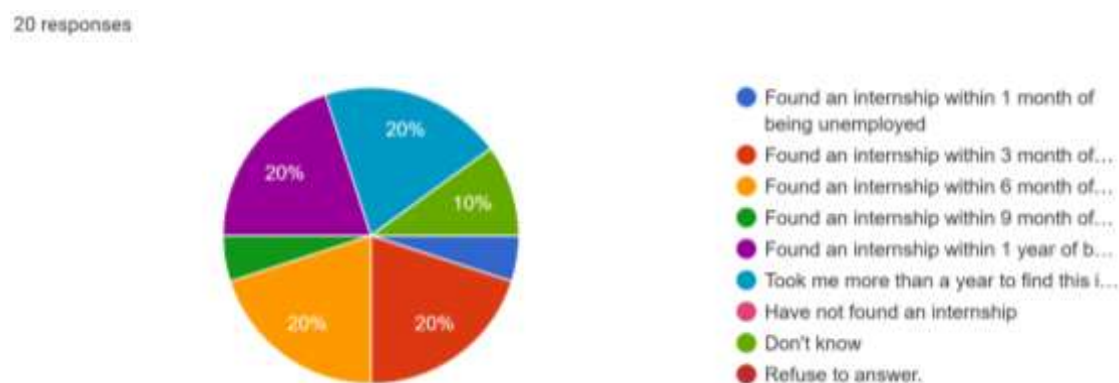


Figure 8: Length of time from your unemployed state to finding a YES placement.

Some participants contradicted the survey data by saying that they did not have to wait at all or that they were placed more quickly than the survey data suggested. The reasons for these quick placements varied, but some participants reported that they followed up with YES, asked when they would be placed, or were recruited by the recruitment partners, which meant quicker placement than being recruited by YES. However, the reasons for these discrepancies were unclear in the FGDs.

### 4.2.4 *Screening participants for interviews*

YES screens youth before inviting them for interviews. The participants indicated that the process involves registering and submitting all required information, such as CVs, before being invited for

interviews. YES then uses the participants' CVs and other information solicited during registration to determine if they should be interviewed.

The criteria used to screen participants for interviews is:

1) participants needed to **meet the requirements of the host company**. Emily said, “[YES staff] will source [youth] online according to what the company [that will host them] needs. Whether there is a driver’s licence [required] or what [ever] kind of qualification [is required].” Evidently, participants must meet a specific company’s requirement, e.g. ‘driver’s licence’, ‘qualification’ etc. The participants communicated that different host companies have different requirements that participants need to meet before they are invited for interviews.

2) participants needed to **meet the requirements set by YES**. For instance, YES ascertains if the youth attended the preplacement training it provides. The participants explained that between the time they sign up and the time they are placed, they are offered preplacement training.

3) Since it takes time for work-experience (or placement) opportunities to come, YES contacts participants to **verify that the information it has on its database is still accurate**. Flora stated, “I got a call from YES and saying “Hey. Are you still looking for a job?” “Yeah. I’m still looking for a job.” “Can you come for the interview?”” Evidently, this verification is to ascertain the current employment status of youth and if youths are open to getting interviews for placement. The criteria imply that YES invites for interviews only those youth who have passed the screening.

#### 4.2.5 Interviewing participants for placement

Participants were interviewed for placement. Sometimes the telephonic interviews were conducted by recruitment partners, while at other times, YES conducted the interviews in person. For example, Flora said, “I came here [to YES HQ] for the interview. [...] By that time, I was in Kimberley. “I’m not around,” and she [lady from YES who called me] is like, “Can you come tomorrow?” YES conducted face-to-face interviews. ‘By that time’ and ‘can you come tomorrow’ imply the participants felt like they were expected to travel a long distance (Kimberley is 470kms from Johannesburg according to Google Maps) in a short amount of time, for only an interview. Some participants from other parts of Gauteng (e.g. Soweto) also said they had to travel tens of kilometres to YES HQ (Rosebank) for their interviews. Bar the distance, job-searching costs are high for the participants. Daisy communicated this to YES, “I don’t have money for transport. When will this interview be? It was just too much for me.” Evidently physical interviews are costly both financially and in terms of time.

Sometimes, the host company conducted the interviews. In such cases, YES invited the participants for the interview and then briefed them about the host company (what it is and what it does). When participants were asked about their experience of the interviews, some said they felt that the interviews went well and that their experience was good. Most of the participants placed at LMC expressed that this was their first job interview ever, and they felt anxious and worried about being interviewed. Suzie said...

*Nabenza le [When they did the] interview, indlebe azifuni ukuva amaquestion. [it was like my ears refused to hear the questions] [...] Bangi welcome-r kahle. Bathi angithathe i-breath [They welcomed me nicely and said I must take a breath] So ngathatha ibreath [So I took a breath]. [...] They were not too formal.”*

Evidently, the participant was so anxious that she could not even understand the interviewers. It was as if something was blocking her ears. However, the welcoming, calming, and supportive words from the interviewers, such as 'breathe', had a positive effect on the participant. She was able to calm down and take a breath. Additionally, the informal manner of the interview was appreciated by the participants. The only interviewers who were mentioned as being supportive were from LMC.

#### 4.2.6 Appointing participants

In the FGD, participants indicated that they were appointed but YES's response time was quick soon after the interviews. Some of the participants were impressed by this. It communicated to them that YES takes them seriously. However, some participants viewed this quick response as unprofessional. The difference between the two groups was the former received the offer days after the interview and the latter was offered the placement immediately after the interview. So, too much haste can be seen as unprofessional and the appearance of a selection process is appreciated.

#### 4.2.7 Participants signing contracts

The participants placed at YES HQ indicated signing contracts with the host companies at the beginning of the placement. This contract included the terms of placement like the salary: job description, host company and salary (i.e. minimum wage). It was not clear if the contract was meant to serve as a programme agreement.

The participants placed at LMC were pleased with the way their supervisor explained the contract to them. They were given a copy to take and read home before signing it, and then sent a copy to their emails after signing. However, the participants at TCC asked for copies of their contract but did not

receive them. As a result, they were unsure who was employing or paying them. In contrast, the participants at LMC were clear about who their host and sponsors were.

#### 4.2.8 Participants gain work-experience and work-integrated learning

The participants expressed that after signing contracts, they receive induction. Then they start their placement programme and receive work-experience which includes work-integrated learning. What emerged in the FGDs is that sometimes the job description in the contracts and work participants do, do not match the skills or qualification participants had prior to the placement programme. Clara said:

*Coming from High School, you go to college for something that you would like to know. You do mechanic. I like doing this, this, this (demonstrates fixing things) and I wanna be handy on things that stuff there. And then come to YES, they give you a job on the office and just have to do things like office admin and that stuff and then you got to learn that. You know what, I was doing that mechanical thing because it was fun at school, and we cannot make any cars and all that stuff but now my heart is on this admin thing.*

Evidently, the participant could not get employment as a mechanic before YES. She then applied for YES but she was offered an “office admin” placement which she had “to learn” how to do. Demonstrably, the work-placement mismatched the skills the participant has and their passion as she “wanna be handy on things”. This has now completely redirected the young woman’s passion. The term “fun” is used to describe mechanics but she uses “admin thing” to show that she does not find it fun but her “heart is on it” now since she “cannot make any cars”. That is, her heart is on administration work because of an unrealised career in mechanics. She has had to love her new normal.

However, some participants at YES HQ rotated around many different departments. The participants saw an upside in being placed in different departments, and some do not necessarily align with her skills. They felt like they were learning, not limited and would have a broad selection of careers after the placement. Yet, the participants at TCC (unlike those at YES HQ) were assigned to departments that align with their qualifications and they were pleased with the results too. The participants at LMC rotated throughout the process of manufacturing. They found that was educative.

#### 4.2.9 Participants’ portfolio of evidence

The survey data shows that most of the participants indicated that YES would provide them with a written reference letter. The FGDs triangulated this result. The participants see as programme outcomes obtaining work-experience, an updated CV and reference letter from YES. However, the

participants at TCC seemed uncertain about who would give them the reference letter, TCC or YES. Receiving a reference letter did not come up in the FGDs with the LMC-placed participants, however, they did express the likelihood of receiving them in the survey. However, that is not the only evidence of being part of the programme. Once the participants finished doing a module, they get a certificate showing this. These certificates can be printed out, kept in electronic format (pdf or an internet link), and attached to participants' LinkedIn accounts. I did some of the modules and they were good. I received certificates (see [Figure 9](#) for one of the certificates). Each module takes about 1-hour to do.



*Figure 9: Certificate rewarded for finishing the YES work-readiness modules.*

#### 4.2.10 *Conclusion of section*

These results showed the implementation of the YES work-placement programme was as follows:

1. **Participants were recruited** by YES and the recruitment partners through advertisements on the newspapers, radio, TV, social media, and the internet, and on the street (i.e. road shows or promotions at taxi ranks, street corners etc.). Participants also found out about YES from a friend, relative, neighbour, and former employers.
2. **Participants registered** on the YES website or at the YES offices providing CV and qualifications. Some participants registered at the recruitment partners' website or offices and were then referred to YES.
3. **Participants waited for placement** after registering for some time, from days to a year or months, the waiting time was reduced by proactive participants who kept on following up or had made 'connections' within YES.
4. **Participants were screened for interviews** to see if 1) they meet the requirements of the host company, 2) meet YES's requirements (such as attending the pre-placement training) and 3) verification of need for placement and availability for interview.
5. **Participants were interviewed for placement** by YES and the recruitment partners or by the host company.
6. **Participants were appointed** by YES and sometimes the recruitment partners were quicker than YES to place participants, with placement given immediately after the interview seen as hasty and unprofessional by some participants but placement given days after the interview seen as prompt.
7. **Participants signed the contract**, which forms the terms of placement but is unclear if it is a programme agreement.
8. **Participants received work-experience** through work-integrated learning. There is sometimes skills mismatch between participants and their placement, but participants view this positively, as a way to open career paths and learn broad and wider skills.
9. **Participants spoke about receiving a portfolio of evidence**, which is an updated CV, a reference letter as evidence of receiving work-experience and certificates as evidence of receiving skills from YES.

### 4.3 Skills provided by YES according to participants

Below I explain how YES provides skills (4.3.1). I then list the soft skills (4.3.2) and hard skills (4.3.3) that YES provides. The results answer sub-question 2, “What are the skills provided by YES?”.

#### 4.3.1 *How YES provides skills*

##### 4.3.1.1 *Online modules in apps*

The participants indicated that YES provides free Wi-Fi access at the hub that everyone can use on any device, which is not to be misused for leisurely activities (like downloading games); it is meant to access information about job, skills, and other opportunities.

The participants indicated that they received Mobi-cells from YES. They explained that YES first secures sponsors for the cellphones and buys the phones. YES sets them up for its apps (YES apps: YES4Youth and YESLife, see [Figure 10](#) below) and that takes time. They further explained that youth are placed at different times and that differentiates the waiting time for different youths to get the Mobi-cells. The delay is also explained by the number of youth and the process that YES must undertake before issuing youth with Mobi-cells like registering the cellphones, and sim cards, and insuring them. The participants also expressed that there were some problems with network connection and other technical errors on the Mobi-cells, however.

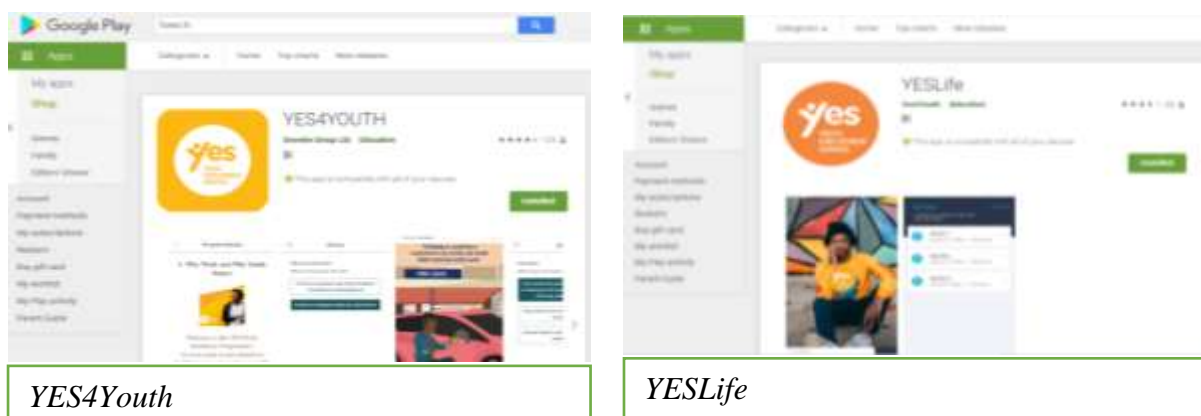


Figure 10: YES apps, i.e. YES4Youth and YESLife on Google Play Store.

The participants explained that the YESLife app was only for placed youth and it is the app used by YES to support and primarily communicate with youth. From my noted down observations in the field, it is also clear that YES communicated directly to youth through the youth stream department, i.e. the department responsible for supporting youth at YES HQ. The participants also said they give feedback to YES through quarterly ‘surveys’ on the YESLife app but also during the quarterly visitations from YES at all the host companies. Note: I conducted this research at TCC and LMC during one of these visitations. So youth do not just raise issues with YES but YES actively invites feedback from youth.

The participants said the skills provision happens mainly via the YES4Youth app. The app has 36 modules. In [Figure 11](#), the first 14 modules are for the work-placement programme and the last 12 modules are for the business development programme. The modules teach different skills: business, psychosocial ('growth mindset'), work-readiness (there are modules about professionalism, dress code and behaviour) and communication skills among many. The participants said that the modules were provided to all registered youth, regardless of whether they are placed or not.

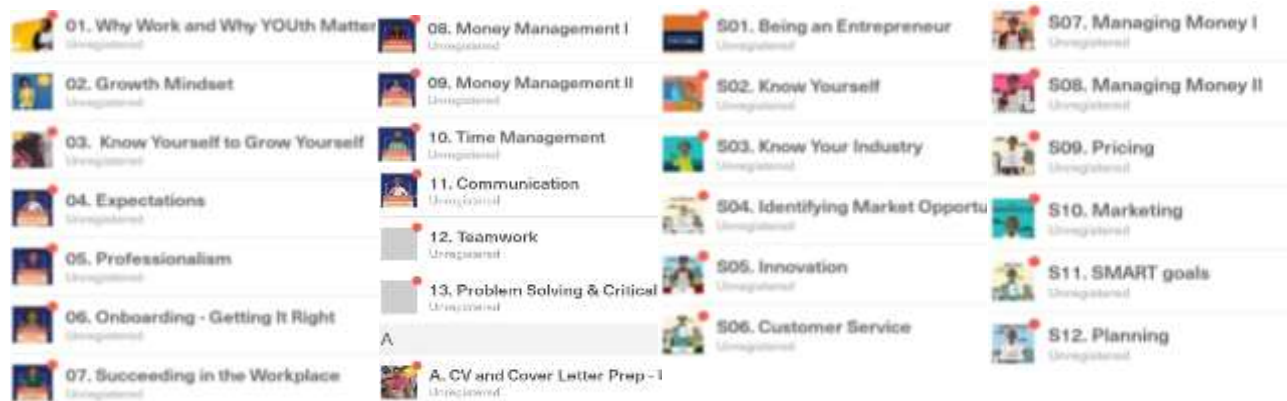


Figure 11: The modules offered in the YES4Youth App.

When asked, the participants said that the modules are delivered in accessible languages: English and African languages with English subtitles. When they spoke about the modules they were visibly excited: spoke up confidently, looked me straight in the eyes, smiled a great deal, buzzed with energy, and lit up. This showed how much the participants were enjoying the apps. They also said that they are helpful and useful. However, they also expressed that the apps had challenges: instead of being zero-rated as promised (meaning that you can access them for free), they charged the usual data costs.

#### 4.3.1.2 Workshops at the hub

In the FGDs, participants indicated that YES provided pre-placement training through workshops. Queen said, “*Ka tla, ka tlo attend-a di-class tsa bona [I came and attended their classes] until ka ilo sebetsa [I went to work].*” Evidently, these classes are offered at the hub after registration and before ‘work’ or placement. This training provides participants with job-searching skills like how to draft a CV. Participants also mentioned that YES offered skills online through 'net games', which were part of the workshops. When asked to describe the games, some participants likened them to TV games. Participants confirmed that the games were user-friendly and played on tablets available at the YES hub. YES employees showed them how to use the tablets and play the games. Clearly the participants are supported during these workshops.

#### 4.3.1.3 Induction at placement

The participants placed at YES HQ received induction. The induction was to on-board the participants into their host company. This was meant to familiarise them with their surroundings and office life, what they would be doing and how the systems work, who works there, including their ‘mentor’ and the supervisor responsible for their training. Please note that the participants placed at YES HQ were originally intended to work at the YES hub in Tembisa but because of challenges at the hub such as not being inducted there (see section [4.5.2](#) for details), they were moved to YES HQ where they were inducted. The participants placed at TCC were inducted to orientate them about the telecommunications industry and what it does, and the company systems and how they work. Similarly, the youth at LMC received induction. They were told what they would do and how to do it, including the different machines. So, in all three host companies, participants were inducted.

#### 4.3.1.4 Work-integrated learning

In the FGDs, participants said that there was training provided during their placement, i.e. Work-integrated learning (WIL). The participants placed at YES HQ indicated that they were provided WIL through mentorship only (see the next subsection [4.3.1.5](#) for details). The participants placed at TCC said they received WIL through mentorship and formalised training. About the latter, Lilly (an HR graduate)ss said, *“From the very first week we learnt how to train our trainers (or mentors within the company) and we call it ‘Train the trainer.’”* Demonstrably, she received training and the fact that this training had a label ‘Train the trainer’ implies that it was more formalised and structured. Training was not limited to Lilly who is working in the HR Department, but others received formal training in their departments, e.g. how to fix problems with network towers. So, there was a structured WIL programme at TCC. The participants placed at LMC also received mentoring and structured WIL. External experts introduced participants to the machines and their various functions and provided manuals for the training. So, all the hosts had WIL but only TCC and LMC had structured WIL.

#### 4.3.1.5 Skilling through mentorship

Participants placed at YES HQ indicated that they learnt some skills from their mentors. The participants further indicated that mentors are often participants’ supervisors. Similarly, mentors at TCC (who are supervisors here too) provided some training to participants. Kim said, *“We learn throughout the year. I just have to look at my supervisor what she does and then I repeat what she does.”* Evidently, the training is done by emulating the supervisor throughout the placement. The participants indicated that the training was for hard skills. However, some participants expressed that it is not clear to them that this is what YES meant about training.

The youth at LMC seemed to be receiving a more indirect form of mentorship or training to lead each other. Rose said, “*Kune [there’s a] team leader every month [...] I-reason for that, ukuthi irotate-e, uthe [The reason for that, is the rotation], she [Charity, the supervisor] wants each one of us afunde ukuba yi-supervisor [to learn how to be a supervisor].*” Demonstrably, the mentor (also supervisor) is training the participants how to be ‘team leaders’. She is doing it with all the participants so that all they can all leave with leadership skills.

In summary, YES provided the participants with skills through modules and workshops at the Hub, while the host companies provided the participants with skills through induction, WIL, and mentorship. The participants felt like YES directly provided mostly soft skills and the host companies provided mostly hard skills. Below I explore the different soft skills (4.3.2) and different hard skills provided (4.3.3).

#### 4.3.2 *Soft skills training:*

In the survey, the participants indicated that YES provided them with soft skills. These are (in the order of their popularity) communication, work-readiness, computer literacy, self-esteem, basic literacy, and basic numeracy. The FGDs triangulated these results. Gloria said, “*Basically, it’s soft skills that we are learning on YES.*” Evidently, YES directly provides soft skills. I explore this further below.

##### 4.3.2.1 *Job-searching and interview skills*

According to the survey, most participants stated that compared to before the YES programme, they gained job-searching skills such as preparing a CV that is ready to be sent to any employer, adapting their CV to meet the requirements of the job they are applying for, preparing a cover letter, and applying electronically using email or the internet (on computers, cellphones, iPads etc.). Participants also reported that the programme helped them keep their CV and cover letter updated. The FGDs triangulated these results. Participants said they gained job-searching skills such as creating CVs and how to market themselves to companies through one of the modules. However some participant felt that YES did not provide sufficient job-searching skills. For example, Tammy said, “*No because they know if I can apply and get another job with a better offer, they know that I am going to resign before 12-month yaka e fela [that I have finishes].*” This is an interesting perspective and it is quite possible that YES wants not only to place but also to keep the participants in placement for the full 12 months. Others disagreed with this perspective.

Additionally, almost all participants in the survey reported that compared to before the YES programme, they gained interviewing skills such as researching a company before an interview, feeling

confident in their interviewing skills, preparing questions to ask in a job interview, showing excitement about a job, answering difficult questions, clearly explaining what the company does, arriving on time for an interview, and dressing and behaving appropriately. However, the FGDs cast doubts on some of these survey results. For example, Queen said...

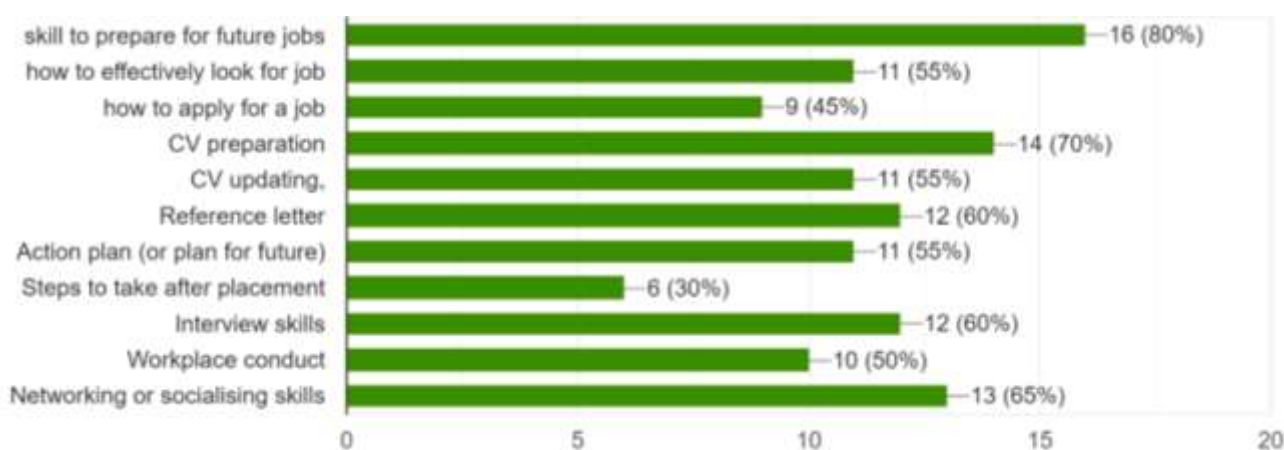
*Nna ke qala interview. Nne ke flopa. Nne ke e botsa hore ho bosetwa eng? Nne ke qala ho a interview. [It was my first interview (the interview for placement). I flopped. I was asking myself, what are they asking? It was my first time going to an interview.*

Demonstrably, the participant needed or may have lacked good interview skills during their placement interviews, despite indicating that they possessed these skills.

In summary, YES programme provided job-searching skills such as updating CVs, writing a cover letter, and searching and applying for jobs. The programme also provided interviewing skills but their effectiveness may vary among participants.

#### 4.3.2.2 *Work-readiness and workplace conduct training*

[Figure 12](#) illustrates what the participants indicated in the survey. YES provided them with work-readiness skills such as (from most popular): skills to prepare for future jobs, CV preparation, networking or socialising skills, interviewing skills, reference letter, how to look for work, CV updating, action plan, workplace conduct, how to apply for a job and steps to take after placement.



*Figure 12: Different work-readiness skills offered by YES to youth.*

The FGDs corroborated the results above, with participants reporting that the YES programme included modules on workplace conduct, professional writing, communication, work readiness (including attitude, dress, and problem-solving skills), and emotional intelligence.

In summary, YES provided participants with job-searching skills (drafting and updating CVs, writing cover letters, and applying for job). The programme also offered work-readiness training and workplace conduct (professionalism) skills through online modules and workshops at the hub.

#### 4.3.2.3 *Psychosocial skills*

The survey data shows that YES provided participants with psychosocial skills and elevated their self-esteem. This was collaborated in the survey when psychosocial skills only came third to communication skills and work-readiness skills (see [Figure 15](#) in appendix 7, p.119). When asked to compare to before YES, the majority of the participants indicated: when they attempt something, they are usually successful, they are confident that they can successfully carry out their plans, they are persistent and do not give up easily, they tend to think about how things can be done differently and they adapt easily to change in their environment. They further indicated that they could persevere even in the face of difficult career circumstances, they feel confident, they know how to bounce back from down times, they know how to seek emotional support from others., they have more people supporting them and they feel comfortable sharing their feelings. The above all shows that participants, compared to how they felt before YES (retrospectively collected), felt more empowered and confident.

The FGDs supported these results and revealed that the participants were initially hesitant on playing net games but later realised that they are useful in terms of strengthening their emotional intelligence. When probed about this usefulness, they said the net games had a psychometric effect that developed participants' skills of self-awareness about their abilities, strength, weaknesses, and their personality. Further, the participants spoke about the growth mindset module, which they praised. They said the module strengthened their self-belief, self-esteem and self-confidence, and positive thinking. They also said that it trains them to have a teachable spirit and willingness to learn and grow.

In summary, YES provided effective psychosocial skills through the net games and the modules, especially the Growth Mindset.

#### 4.3.2.4 *Basic literacy and basic numeracy (including financial literacy) skills*

Participants who were placed at YES HQ and TCC learnt how to write professionally through the programme. Some of the skills taught were general professional writing skills, while others were specific to certain industries. Lilly from TCC said that she learnt, “*writing skills like when you write letters. In Legal, you have to draft a letter of demand, a letter of intent, renewal of contract and all of that.*” Demonstrably, the participants acquired valuable professional writing skills that are useful in their daily job-related functions. The participants at LMC did not indicate that they learned these skills.

Some participants working in finance-related departments were given basic numeracy skills by their supervisors. These are finance-related numeracy skills included how to write and read numbers, using Excel, and reporting numbers. These skills were provided to the participants by the supervisor because they are central to finance-related work. In contrast, participants at TCC, LMC, and YES HQ, did not have to be that numerate for their work. However, in the survey it was clear that most of the participants felt that they could generally set a budget for themselves compared to before the YES programme. This was affirmed by the FGDs. Participants spoke about a Budgeting Module that taught them how to save money, manage their finances, and budget effectively.

In summary, the YES programme provided basic literacy skills, such as professional writing, and basic numeracy skills, including financial literacy skills such as budgeting, through mentorship and modules.

#### 4.3.2.5 *Networking and interpersonal skills*

In the survey, all the participants indicated compared to before YES, they now find it easy to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships or connections they have made with people or networks. Most participants said that compared to before YES, they now know how to use their networks to find a job. All the participants said compared to before YES, they find it easy to adapt to different social situations. Almost all the participants said compared to before YES, they change their non-verbal behaviour in different cultural circumstances. However it was not clear in the FGDs how YES developed the participants' networking skills. The FGDs showed that participants learnt about teamwork, how to be helpful to each other and work as individuals at the host companies.

In summary, participants were provided with interpersonal skills (working in a team and as individuals) in host companies. However, it is unclear how YES developed networking skills.

#### 4.3.2.6 *Leadership and communication skills*

Participants at LMC said they obtained leadership skills through the rotation of the role of team leader that their supervisor instigated. However, participants also highlighted the challenges of leading people, such as being accountable for their team's motivation and performance. This is likely the lesson that Charity (LMC supervisor) is teaching them. There was no evidence that YES HQ and TCC offered leadership skills in the FGDs. In the FGDs, participants indicated that they received communication skills. Flora said, "*Personally, I can say they [YES] helped me, like, how to communicate at work, how do you communicate with friends, how do you communicate with your bosses and all that.*" In another FGD, Nancy replied to the same question, "*Nokuthi uzifundise ukwazi uku-handle-ar ama-conflict kanjani [And how to handle conflicts].*" This shows that participants developed communication skills, including how to communicate with friends, colleagues and bosses, and conflict resolution skills.

In summary, YES provided participants leadership and communication skills.

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In conclusion, this sub-section provided results that show that YES provided job-searching skills, interview skills (which may not be effective), work-readiness and workplace conduct skills, psychosocial skills, basic literacy, and basic numeracy skills (including financial literacy skills), networking and interpersonal skills, and leadership (only at LMC) and communication skills.

### 4.3.3 *Hard skills training*

In the survey data, the participants selected that YES provided them with hard skills (according to popularity): retail, hospitality, administration, mechanic, and information technology. The FGDs collaborated these results and they further showed that this was provided indirectly through the host companies, mostly through mentors. When asked how mentors determined the skill that participants needed, the participants said that the mentors methodologically determined the skills participants needed by sitting them down, looking at their employment and educational history, and asking what their interest are. Once this was done, the mentors and the participants worked on the skills that they both identified as needed by the participants as part of the mentorship. Participants also indicated that these skills were also provide through WIL and external training sometimes, i.e. extern to YES HQ, YES generally or any of the host companies.

#### 4.3.3.1 *Mechanical skills*

The survey data showed that participants at LMC learnt mechanical skills. FGDs collaborated this. Rose said, *“Basitshela ukuthi ngumshini bani lona, wenzani, wenzani. [They show us the different machines and what they do.]”* Mary added, *“You know all the machines, you know the pulp sheet, you know the presser, the glue and so on.”* Demonstrably, participants learnt about and how to use many different machines from the beginning of the production of pads to the end. These are the mechanical skills.

#### 4.3.3.2 *Technological and computer literacy skills*

Participants placed at TCC learnt technological skills, with Kim learnt, *“about what telecommunication is and what TCC does. What is the network, the towers and how does a network work.”* Evidently, they were provided more specialised IT or telecommunication skills to know about the industry, networks, and other related technological skills and concepts. While all the participants received computer literacy skills, i.e. internet and Microsoft Programs. The participants indicated that this was done through experts or the mentorship. Some participants suggested expanding the computer literacy training to the general community, with Nancy said,

*Mina ngingathi kube nama more containers anama computers ukuthi abantu bafumane icomputer (skills), i-information because internet cafe khona la a-scarce scarce. [I would say they must have more computers so that others can gain computer (skills), access information because internet cafes, are very scarce here].*

The participant is repeating the word ‘scarce’ twice, which is an African way of emphasis, to signify that there is a serious scarcity of internet cafes in the community. Clearly, the participant is highlighting that the need for computer literacy skills and information is not only limited to YES-registered youth or placed youth, but it also extends to the community.

#### 4.3.3.3 Entrepreneurial or business skills

All the participants said they received business or entrepreneurial skills through a module called ‘*Siyazakhela*’, which taught them how to open businesses. It is worth noting that YES not only has a work-placement programme, but it also has a business development programme, which was not the focus of this study. However, it is clear that the entrepreneurial skills were given to all youth regardless of the programme they are in.

#### 4.3.3.4 Other hard skills

It is evident that some participants received other hard skills. Bonnie learnt, “*Graphic Design*”. Hannah learnt “*Project management skills*”. Nancy learnt “*Marketing and Business Training*”. Clara learnt, “*Accountancies, making sure that files reconcile*”. Lilly learnt “*how to train the trainers*” and Amy received “*Technical (IT skills) [...] and analysing the data [skills]*.” Demonstrably, some participants learnt other hard skills. They all learnt these skills through WIL with the mentors or by taking courses externally. Some participants received basic Early Childhood Development (ECD) training during the workshops, specifically prenatal care, postnatal care, and child-rearing skills. Participants felt that these are useful skills for personal development (raising their children) and professional reasons (getting ECD jobs).

This sub-section showed that YES provided participants with hard skills such as mechanical skills, technological and computer literacy skills, business skills and other skills (ECD training, graphic design, project management, marketing, business training, accountancy, train-the-trainer, technical IT skills and data analysis).

#### 4.3.4 Conclusion of section

This section was answering sub-question 2. [Table 16](#) summarises the results. YES provides mostly soft skills effectively through the modules (via the apps which are available to all registered youth)

and workshops at the hub (including net games that are open to all registered youth). YES provides youth (regardless of registration status) with free Wi-Fi at the hub and lent Mobi-cells to all placed youth. However, there were network problems and technical errors on the Mobi-cells. The soft skills are job-searching, interview, work-readiness, workplace conduct, psychosocial, basic literacy, and numeracy, networking, interpersonal, socialising, leadership (only at LMC), and communication skills. It was not clear how effective the job-searching skills (how to apply for a job and securing a job) and the interview skills may not have been effective. So, there is room for improvement. Host companies provided mostly hard skills effectively through induction (on-boarding), WIL (by supervisors and external experts), and mentorship. The skills provided by host companies are mechanical, entrepreneurial, technological (and computer literacy) and other skills, i.e. ECD, graphic design, project management, marketing, business training, accountancy, train-the-trainer, technical (IT) and data analysis skills.

*Table 16: Results mapped against the skills criteria.*

Skills	Provision	Results
<b>Hard Skills (overall):</b>	Mostly Indirectly (host companies)	effective
• mechanical skills	Indirectly at LMC only	effective
• technological skills	Indirectly at TCC only	effective
• business skills	Directly by YES	effective
• other hard skills	Both: YES and host companies	effective
<b>Soft skills (overall):</b>	Directly	effective and needs improvement
• self-esteem/psychosocial skills	Directly by YES	effective
• communication skills	Both: YES and host companies	effective
• networking or socialising skills.	Unclear	needs improvement
• leadership	Indirectly at LMC only	effective
• basic literacy	Indirectly through host companies	effective
• basic numeracy (incl. financial literacy)	Both: YES and host companies	effective
• computer literacy	Both: YES and host companies	effective
• work-readiness training	Directly by YES	effective
• workplace conduct	Directly by YES	effective
• interpersonal skills (working as an individual and in teams)	Indirectly through host companies	Effective but needs improvement
• job-searching skills	Directly by YES	Further research area
○ how to effectively look for job	Directly by YES	Further research area
○ how to apply for a job	Directly by YES	Further research area
• interviewing skills	Directly by YES	needs improvement

## 4.4 Comprehensiveness of YES according to participants

Below, I look at the comprehensiveness of the programme in its delivery of psychosocial support (4.4.1), mentorship (4.4.2), social capital (4.4.3), career development (4.4.4), skills offering (4.4.5), work-experience (4.4.6) and reduction of costs of job-searching (4.4.7). The results answer sub-question 3, “How comprehensive is YES using the criteria developed from literature?”

### 4.4.1 *Provide psychosocial support*

As part of the skills training, participants indicated that YES provided them with psychosocial skills through net games and modules in the YES4Youth app (particularly the growth mindset module) (see section 4.3.2.3 for details). In the survey, most of participants indicated that compared to before YES, they know how to seek emotional support from others, and they have more supportive people. The FGDs triangulated the results. LMC seems to provide exemplary support to participants, Olivia said,

*Siba namasession e-mindfulness. Ayasinceda ngoba umsebenzi wethu uyakhathaza. Uyabona, kuwo lawo ma-session they help us ukuthi si-relax nasemsebenzini ukuthi sibe-right. [We have mindfulness sessions. They help because our work is stressful. In those sessions, they help us to relax, even at work to be alright].*

Mary added,

*They [LMC] organise ama-session [sessions] to therapy.” Nancy added, “When you are frustrated or feel stressed, we have yoga sessions. [...] Uyasinceda ukuthi [the yoga instructor helps us]. “If you feel like this, this is what you do to calm yourself down.” By the time, isession i-over uzizwa u-easy [the session is over you feel easy (meaning lighter)].*

Evidently LMC goes a step further and provides participants with psychosocial support: mindfulness training, therapy, and yoga, for free. Also, the work seems to be ‘stressful’ and ‘frustrating’. Participants find these psychosocial interventions very useful because they help them ‘relax’, ‘to be right’, ‘calm down’ and feel ‘lighter’.

Conversely, the participants placed at TCC did not indicate that they received any psychosocial support except for the psychosocial skills that YES provides through the modules. However, the participants working at YES HQ found their placement emotionally challenging. Bonnie said,

*As a youth, the things people said, asking you how you got a job, it was not nice to hear. You could see their frustration. Someone will come and tell you, I stay with my grandmother, children and what not and I don't have a job. It's painful.*

Demonstrably, it is triggering for participants to work with other youth who are in the same situation as them, even though they are now placed. Participants have listened to heart-breaking and psychologically challenging situations, which have caused them to have "painful" feelings. It is obvious that psychosocial support is needed in such situations, and participants have voiced this to YES HQ. Daisy said,

*It was just too much for me. I even spoke to my supervisor and told her. [...] My support is my supervisor. There's no other support. No counsellor or therapist. There's no support like that, right guys? (All agreeing.)*

Demonstrably, the issues that other youth share with the participants negatively impacted them so to the point that they are flagging this with their supervisors. It appears that psychosocial support for the participants comes solely from supervisors. However, it seems participants have an expectation of having more psychosocial support, particularly from mental health experts like "counsellors" or "therapists".

In summary, psychosocial support is hardly provided at YES HQ and TCC, with the former having the added disadvantage of having work that emotionally triggers participants but only being supported psychosocially by supervisors or mentors. On the other hand, LMC provides comprehensive psychosocial support.

#### 4.4.2 Provide mentorship

The participants placed at YES HQ had multiple mentors. Bonnie said,

*I had too many mentors, four of them. [They each] do something different. [...] The other ones it's personal and educational levels. She will guide me to apply [for jobs] and she's the one who made me, to take my things to HR for training, project management, since I had lack of skills somewhere somehow. And then this other one, she's always there to listen to me whenever I'm having love-life trouble things. So, it's a good thing.*

Evidently, there are mentors who provide professional advice ('apply [for jobs]' and 'for training') and personal advice ('love-life trouble'). The fact that participants see it as a "good thing" shows how

useful and effective the mentorship was. The participants placed at TCC had multiple mentors too. However, some participants might have had challenges with the mentorship at TCC. Kim expressed,

*Some [mentors] they end up bringing their personal business at work. So, they end up shouting at you. Some days are good, and some days are bad. [...] The thing is, they don't understand that we are not all the same. Sometimes she might teach me something and then I forget. So maybe they have to repeat themselves and they end up saying, "Like what? Like why didn't you get it sooner?" The thing is, as mentors, you need to have like the patience to understand that as people we are different. So, we need to be patient with other people as well 'cause at the end of the day they get where they are now because of that experience that was taught to them.*

Clearly, the mentors are unprofessional by taking out their frustrations on participants ('bringing their personal business at work' and 'shouting'). They lack patience and compare the participants against other youth (who are 'not all the same'). However, some participants did not have these challenges. Hannah said, "*I have a very patience mentor.*" Evidently, some mentors have 'patience'. So, the experiences of difficult mentors were not universal at TCC. Participants placed at LMC said they did not have a mentor, but they identified Charity as their boss. From how they speak about her, it can be inferred that they are describing a supervisor. She explained and provided copies of the contracts to participants and fostered an environment where leadership skills can be honed and teamwork encouraged.

In summary, the mentorship is provided but in a somewhat comprehensive way. It needs to be standardised across different sectors, host companies and departments within the host companies.

#### 4.4.3 Provide some social capital

In the survey, most participants indicated that YES had provided them with valuable networks. They also felt strongly that they built networks in the programme with people that can advance their career. Most participants felt that YES connected them somewhat to relevant government departments, e.g. the Department of Labour, Home Affairs, Health, and Education. Some felt absolutely connected while others were unsure about being connected to the education system. Of those that felt connected, the most frequent responses were connections to secondary school, FET college, TVET college, universities of technology, and universities. Furthermore, participants felt somewhat connected to the private sector and society. There was no connection to unions, national youth bodies or other sectors. Most participants felt connected to other opportunities that would lead to having a job or creating a business.

The FGDs somewhat corroborated these results. Participants said that the mentorship programme is one way they gained valuable connections, such as with their mentors. Participants also stated that YES saw the need to connect them to education institutions, encouraged them to study further and sometimes YES was willing to assist with paying fees. Other participants were encouraged to do online courses and to rewrite matric through Adult Basic Education and Training. Participants were also encouraged to get driver's licences. The participants said, YES empowers them to get their driver's licences by providing them with resources and referring them to affordable driving schools. However, the participants at TCC and YES HQ did not indicate knowing about this.

Participants are also making connections outside of YES. Gloria said,

*Mostly when clients call, you know, they sometimes ask, "What are you doing there?" And maybe they're seeing my signature written 'YES youth'. They will ask, "Are you really like 'YES youth'? You don't even sound like a YES youth. Do you want like a permanent job?"*  
*(She laughs.)*

Evidently, the participant is forging connections with organisations outside of YES, impressing them to the point of being offered a job. It is also noteworthy that clients have an image of what a 'YES youth' should sound like, and Gloria does not fit that image. Since she has impressed them, it can be inferred that they may perceive 'YES youth' as unimpressive. It is important to note that Gloria has an Honours/BTech or higher degree.

In summary, the provision of connections by YES is somewhat comprehensive, except for connections to the education, training, and other sectors. However, all provision of connections needs to be standardised.

#### 4.4.4 Provide career development

In the survey, all participants indicated that YES provided them with skills that they need to be successful in their career. They also felt more confident that they spend a lot of time enhancing their knowledge and skills to benefit their careers. Compared to how they felt before YES, most participants now regularly reflect on their career aspirations, seek information about careers, ask others about their strengths and weaknesses, have clearly formulated career goals and action plans on how to achieve them, know what they want to accomplish in their careers, and set challenging career targets for themselves.

In the FGD, there was no evidence that participants at TCC received career development, while participants at LMC indicated that YES provides career development through the modules and the net-games. The YES HQ participants felt like YES provides career development through informal conversations with mentors and by making youth work in different departments even if they do not have qualifications or work-experience related to those departments. Clara said, *“You’ve gained a skill from YES from this department and now you gonna look at other options and think you can do a degree on those things.”* Evidently, participants feel that rotating in departments is opening up career paths (employment and educational ones).

In summary, the career development provided by YES is somewhat comprehensive but needs improvement, formalisation, and standardisation.

#### 4.4.5 Provide skills

The direct provision of skills occurred through workshops at the hub before placement, net games at the Hub and the modules in the apps. During placement, training is provided by the host company (i.e. YES HQ, TCC and LMC) through induction, work-integrated learning (which was delivered through short courses or training by the host company, or courses offered by other parties that the host organised or mentorship). For details about this, please see section [4.3.1.5](#). In summary, the provision of skills is comprehensive. However, it needs to be offered to all youth regardless of their location (near or far from the hub) and standardised for host companies (at least the process for WIL, induction, and mentorship).

#### 4.4.6 Provide work-experience

In the survey all the participants indicated that YES provided them with work-experience. This was triangulated in the FGDs. Clara said, *“I’m gaining more [work] experience in YES and so it’s great.”* Lilly said, *“The 12 months work-experience It’s something worth it. So, I think they [expectations] were met.”* Pretty said, *“I-experience engiyifumeneyo [the experience I received] I can put it kwiCV yam [on my CV].”* Evidently, participants gained work-experience which they find valuable and which meets their expectations and they believe will be useful for future job-searching (‘put on their CV’). In summary, the work-experience is comprehensive.

#### 4.4.7 Reduce job-searching costs

In the survey, some participants indicated that YES helped and paid for the costs of (in order of commonality): the internet, travelling and printing. This corresponds with my notes, in the field, where I heard from one of the YES staff members and some of the youth at the YES HQ that YES helps

youth with transport costs. They said that there is an allowance given to the youth placed at the YES HQ. During the quarterly surveys that I attended at TCC and LMC, youth kept asking about incentives for using and completing the modules in the apps. These incentives are electricity or airtime vouchers that youth receive for every finished module on the YES4youth app. Additionally, there is free Wi-Fi available at the hubs.

#### 4.4.8 Conclusion of section

This section answered sub-question 3. [Table 17](#) below summarises the results. YES provides limited career development and limited connection to universities of technology and other tertiary institutions. Conversely, YES provides comprehensive mentorship, psychosocial support (but only at LMC, while somewhat comprehensive at TCC and YES HQ), social capital, skills, work-experience, and a reduction in job-searching costs. It is also comprehensive in connecting participants to secondary education. However, psychosocial support from mental health experts is needed. LMC is the best practice for psychosocial support because it provides yoga, mindfulness training and therapy. YES needs to offer skills to all youth regardless of registration status and location (near or far from the hub). It must standardise skills provision at host companies (i.e. WIL, induction, and mentorship). YES is somewhat comprehensive in how it links participants to different government departments and sectors.

Table 17: Results mapped against the comprehensiveness criteria.

Comprehensiveness Criteria	Delivery	Results
Provide career development	Indirectly through modules & net-games	Limited
Provide mentorship	Indirectly through host companies	Comprehensive
Provide psychosocial support	Both: YES and host companies	Comprehensive at LMC only. Elsewhere it is somewhat comprehensive
Provide some social capital	Both	Comprehensive
Provide work-experience	Indirectly through host companies	Comprehensive
Provide skill	Both	Comprehensive.
Reduce cost of job-searching, e.g. cost of travelling to interviews, data costs etc	Directly	Comprehensive
Link different departments and different sectors (private sector, government etc.)	Both	Somewhat comprehensive
Connection to unions, national youth bodies or other sectors	Unclear	Further research area
Connection to other opportunities	Both	Somewhat comprehensive
Connection to education system	Directly	Somewhat comprehensive
• Primary	Unclear	Further research area
• Secondary, return to school or rewrite matric	Directly	Comprehensive
• Tertiary	Directly	Somewhat comprehensive
○ Universities	Directly	Somewhat comprehensive
○ university of technology	Directly	Limited
• Other tertiary	Directly	Limited
○ FET or TVET college		○ Limited
○ Apprentice/Learnership		○ Limited

## 4.5 Commendations, shortcomings and gaps, and suggestions from participants

Below are the results about the commendations (4.5.1) and the shortcomings (4.5.2) that the participants identified about the YES programme and its implementation. Also, the participant communicated their thoughts about the next stages after the programme (4.5.3). The participants also proposed some improvements to YES (4.5.4). I also identified some gaps in the programme (4.5.5). These results partially answer sub-question 6, “How commendable and challenged is YES?”

### 4.5.1 *Commendable work done by YES*

Much commendable work has been done by YES. The work-placement programme seems well designed as seen in section 4.2.10. The stages of the programme seem to follow a well thought out sequenced flow. Such that as soon as the participants find out about YES to the conclusion of the programme, little time is wasted. The waiting time between registration and placement (see below) is occupied with pre-placement training. There is also training during the placement, which provides valuable skills.



Nonetheless, in the FGDs, the participants sang praises about the delivery of the skills, particularly the Growth Mindset (psychosocial skills) Module and the Budgeting (financial skills) Module that YES provided them via the apps. The participants complimented the computer literacy skills provided during the workshops at the hub as useful. The host companies were seen as completely effective at providing hard skills and YES provides softs skills that the participants mostly found effective. Furthermore on the different aspect of the programme, the participants praised the work-experience as the strongest aspect of the programme. The mentorship was viewed favourably by the participants. They also commended the reduction of job-searching costs. These are the praises from the participants.

Participants expressed how young people need employment and YES is contributing to reducing the youth unemployment crisis in the country. They found YES to be empowering and providing skills to many unemployed young people. However some participants want YES to do more. They suggest that YES place youth also in local Small, Medium, and Micro-sized Enterprise (SMMEs) e.g. doctors, spaza shop etc. and not only the current list of host companies at YES. Overall, the participants received YES well. Ivy said, “*The treatment I used to get while I was still working for retail was far different from here [at YES placement]. Like the treatment here was great and awesome.*” Rose

expressed, “*Khona nje esingakusho nje ukuthi ichange impilo zethu. Kakhulu futhi. E he! Iyenze i-difference enkulu nje e-life-ini. [What we can say is that it changed our lives, a lot too. Yes! It made a huge difference in life.]*” Gloria said, “*Overall, it [YES] has been amazing.*” Amy said, “*All in all, it [YES] was a great experience.*” The impact of YES is revealed by extraordinary remarks, such as “*the treatment here was great and awesome*”, “*it made a huge difference in life*”, “*it was a great experience*” and “*amazing*”. So, the participants found YES to be an exceptional programme.

Not only was YES helping the participants, but it was also helping the community. At the Tembisa hub, where I conducted some of the interviews, the participants expressed that the local restaurant (or tuck shop) is an SMME owned by Black women and it employed local people. Pretty added, “*YES also helps the community because batshalile lapha ispinach [they have a food garden, with spinach]. Even that R10, ungayi save-ar [you can save it] and then come to YES [to get vegetables]*”. This shows that there is some social assistance (in kind) for the community around the hub. The participants also communicated about how helpful the staff at the hub is. They said that the staff does not get annoyed, and that they are helpful, patient, non-judgemental, and supportive.

In summary, the participants applauded YES's skills provision (particularly the psychosocial skills module and financial skills module) and different aspects of the programme (particularly the mentorship, reduction of costs, and work experience). They found YES to be effective in providing soft skills while host companies were more effective in providing hard skills. Overall, they lauded the YES programme. They also found YES to be helpful to the community where the hub is located. Additionally, the youth found the employees at the hub to be nurturing, and they felt that there is an unemployment crisis in South Africa and YES is contributing to improving the situation.

#### 4.5.2 Implementation shortcomings

Some participants' wishes were not honoured by YES. For example, Pretty said, “*Ngasho ngathi ngifuna ukwenza i-computer course [I said that I want to do a computer course].*” Demonstrably, she wanted to study computers but she was offered placement. Clara expressed, “*Coming from High School, you go to college for something that you would like to know, like, you do mechanic. [...] And then come to YES, they give you a job on the office [...] to do things like office admin [...] Then you got to learn that.*” Evidently, she wanted to be a mechanic but was offered an administration job and she had to retrain for that. The participants placed at YES HQ indicated that they were initially placed at the Tembisa hub and there were challenges there, such as not having a manager for 5 months. They said that the programme delivery for them was negatively impacted during these months and there was not much mentorship or WIL. They said that they used their agency to get older participants to 'mentor'

and train them. All these participants were later placed at the YES HQ ('head office'), where there was evidently mentorship.

The participants indicated that YES and the recruitment partners (Lulaways, UnlockD and Giraffe) do not communicate sufficiently with placed youth. Daisy said, *“They need to improve the communication with youth. They need to find someone who can communicate with youth and who is more relatable and adaptive when communicating with youth.”*

Evidently, participants identify communication with placed youth as an area that needs improvement. They are calling for a designated coordinator who can be easily reachable to them as youth. Notably, the suggestion that the placed youth must have such a person to ensure that they are fine and know what step to take next, was consistent across all interviews, even the word choice used by participants was similar even though all 3 groups do not know each other, work in 3 different sectors and are geographically separated. This shows the importance of continued communication that is clear and honest between YES (and/or its recruitment partners) and the placed youth. This is despite YES having quarterly visitations.

The participants placed at TCC had concerns about the use of their names. Despite being informed prior to the start of interviews that that would not happen. I had to constantly assure, remind, and explain to them what the consent form meant about anonymity. They also expressed concerns about being interviewed in a group instead of one-by-one. So, I offered them the opportunity to be interviewed as individuals. Some of the revelations about mentors at TCC came from this individually collected data, which was unique to the TCC group. Demonstrably, there are some trust issues among participants at TCC.

In summary, YES faced some challenges during its pilot stage, such as not aligning participants' wishes with the work-placement, initially not having a manager at the Tembisa hub, which negatively impacted participants' experience of the work-placement, the need for consistent communication during work-placement, and some trust issues at some host companies such as TCC. Some parts of the programme implementation duplicated registration with recruitment agencies that are linked together, not providing effective training on interview skills, not providing a copy of the contract to participants, the delivery of mobi-cells months into the placement, apps charging data costs, hub workshops being available only to youth who live close to hubs, and a lack of oversight over mentorship.

### 4.5.3 Next stages after programme

The survey responses indicated that most participants want to be employed after the programme, and the rest (few) want to be self-employed. Most want to work for the government, followed by the NGO sector and then the business sector. Most participants responded that they would accept a minimum of R5,000 per month. The vast majority expect to find work immediately after the programme. However, the FGDs triangulated and complicated these results. The participants indicated that they had already applied for other opportunities, but the job search for participants has not been promising. They said they received little response or rejection, which they feel is discouraging. The participants expressed their frustrations that, despite being educated, they are rejected in the labour market for not having skills. They conveyed that YES should assist them. Mary said,

*It is a sad story because they are saying they are providing youth with jobs and all that but whenever the contract is ending they are not placing you somewhere else. Instead you are going back home to sit down.*

Evidently, participants have the desire to find employment, and they feel that YES should place them; otherwise, the whole objective of the programme (i.e. reducing unemployment) will be pointless if they do not have exit opportunities. They also said that they want a raise in their salary.

In summary, participants have been searching for post-programme opportunities, but they have been rejected. They want YES to provide them with exit opportunities and better income post-programme.

### 4.5.4 Suggestions for YES to be more expansive

The participants suggested that hubs have permanent staff (especially front staff such as reception) to ensure continuity so that youth can find familiar faces when they visit the hub and seek information. Some participants were of a different view. Olivia said,

*I prefer ukuthi u-move-we kungabikho ama-permanent post [Me, I prefer that you move and there are no permanent post] because le ndawo le kwawuthiwe [this place {hub} it was said that it] is for i-work-experience [work-experience]. So create ama-opportunity [opportunities] for abanye [others]. If bebakuthatha [they take you] maybe and place you in some other company kungene omunye umuntu omusha [and some one knew takes over].*

Other participants agreed. Evidently, the participants want the position of the receptionist to include rotating and giving the skill to placed youth at the hub. The participants also suggested that YES expand its services to include giving access to computers to school learners because the library is too

far. The other participants agreed and added that this should include the provision of computer literacy training and information to learners to assist them with their schoolwork and career development.

In summary, the participants proposed that the hubs have permanent staff members (especially at the front desk). Others wanted the positions to rotate among youth that YES places at the hubs. They suggested that to increase the impact of YES, some youth should be placed at local SMMEs. They also advocated that YES offer computer literacy training and information provision to school learners.

#### 4.5.5 Gender mainstreaming at YES

These results in this section emerged from the sample of the study, which is young Black women and the experiences they mentioned in the FGDs. Although some questions in the survey and FGDs were specifically related to women's experiences (e.g. motherhood and care work), they did not explicitly ask how the participants, as women or mothers, experienced the programme. This is my blind spot as a male researcher studying women's experiences.

The participants spoke about women mentor “as mothers” who not only offered professional advice but they offered personal advice. Bonnie said, “*One [mentor], she's [like] a mother. She will tell me every day how to take care of my kids.*” Demonstrably, there are mentors for personal advice (who are like a 'mother' and offer advice on 'how to take care of my [participants'] kids). Women may have challenges that YES may not have considered. The participants communicated that they had care responsibilities that held them at home, and if they did not go out, they would have missed out on finding out about YES. The participants mentioned that YES indirectly enhanced their mothering skills by providing ECD training at the hub.

There was little evidence that gender was mainstreamed in the programme. However, the work-placement at LMC shows plenty of results that LMC focused on women. Perhaps this is because it creates sanitary pads and as Nancy said, “*It's a product made for women by women (others all join her in saying this).*” Demonstrably, this is LMC's motto, and since all the women join in saying it, it is part of the brand of LMC that participants have been exposed to. The motto communicates that the product is not only sold to women, but it is also created by women. In other words, it creates employment for women. The participants also said that LMC only wanted women to be placed there. The participants liked this. Nancy said,

*La basi-place-e khona [where they placed us] [LMC] it's actually a good place because sisebenza singabafazi [we work as women] and we have different personalities. Sometimes we clash and then we make peace. At the end of the day, it's a really good place. You get to learn*

*a lot. Wonke muntu uzanama-experience wakhe a-different [everyone brings their experience which are different], and then we share. And then you get to learn from those experiences.*

Evidently, the participants at LMC work as women. Even though they come from different backgrounds, with different experiences and personalities, and sometimes there is conflict, they still get to share their experiences as women. Pretty explained this,

*We have experience as umfazi ukuthi kumele ube yimbokodo (B laughs). Maw' sebenza nabanye abafazi [women that you have to be strong as a rock. When you work with other women.] it means ukuthi mele ube umuntu onothando [it means you have to be loving], patient, i-self-discipline [self-disciplined], know how to work with other people. It's a skill ukuthi wena maw' uyi-boss [that when you are a boss] and you no longer work with abo Nancy [and no longer working with Nancy and others]. When you are meeting other new faces, that treatment ube utreat-ar ngayo ooNancy [you treated Nancy and others with] you must treat other people [with it].” Nancy added, “U-treat umuntu [To treat people] the way you want to be treated.*

Evidently, the participant sees women as having 'to be strong as a rock' in the traditional sense, but the laugh suggests that she does not believe this to be true. This is further corroborated by the fact that she sees the need for women who work with other women to have emotional intelligence (to have 'love', 'patience', 'self-discipline', be cooperative, and fair and just 'treat people the way you want to be treated'). That is strength to her. She also sees this as 'a skill' needed by good managers (or 'bosses'). Additionally, the participants said that they feel like they should have solidarity, support each other, and not sabotage each other at work as women.

In summary, the participants were somewhat considered to have unique needs as women compared to their male peers by YES, as demonstrated by the Early Childhood Development (ECD) training. Sometimes mentors seem to consider the needs of women, such as offering parenting advice. However, there is a need for more evidence to find out if women's needs were considered systemically and embedded across the different aspects of the programme, i.e. gender mainstreaming. LMC seems to have considered the unique needs of women as it was interested in only having women placed there. LMC ensured to integrate women's needs in the work-placement programme. This is evidenced by the sisterhood consciousness among the participants about how working with women should be.

#### 4.5.6 Conclusion of section

The YES programme is well-designed, and its implementation is effective (e.g. skills provision, mentorship, etc.). YES helps the communities where the hubs are located. However, the participants

expressed some shortcomings, such as a mismatch of skills during placement, initial lack of leadership at the Tembisa hub, and inadequate communication with placed youth. Participants have started searching for employment, but they were rejected. They wish that YES provided them with exit opportunities. They proposed having permanent front desk jobs at the hubs, which can transfer skills to placed youth, placing youth at local SMMEs, and learners receiving information from YES. There is little evidence of gender mainstreaming at YES, unlike LMC, where women are centred.

### Conclusion of Chapter 4:

The results show, firstly, that the participants are from low-income backgrounds. Before joining the YES programme, most youth were unemployed for more than a year. Youth needed skills, productive social capital, information, and psychosocial support. They also have care responsibilities. Secondly, YES has a well-sequenced 10 stages of implementation from recruitment to the end of the work-experience programme. These stages are explored in detail in the sections indicated in [Figure 13](#).

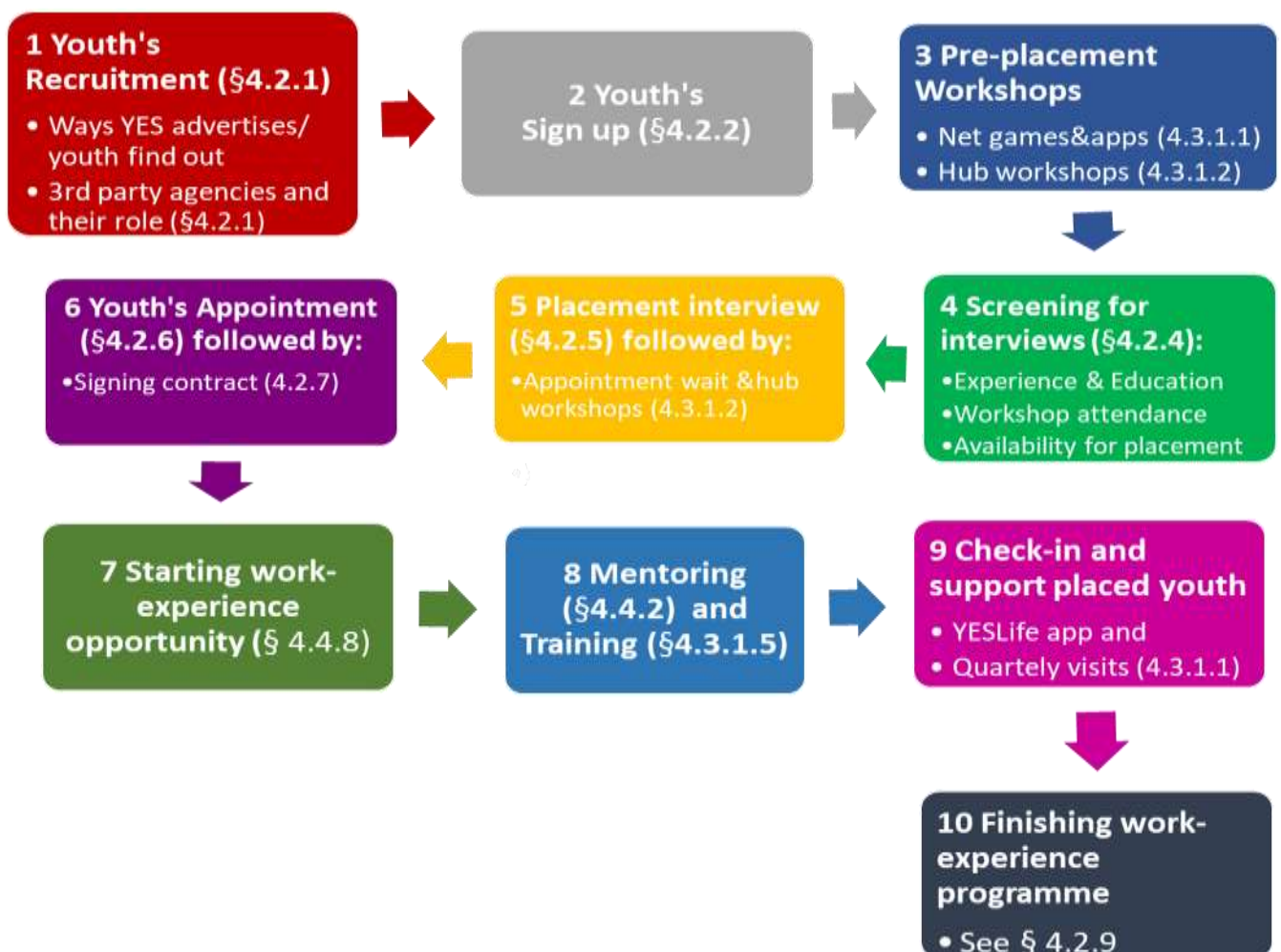


Figure 13: Stages of the YES work-placement programme according to participants.

Thirdly, YES is somewhat effective in providing soft skills while host companies are effective in providing hard skills. However, skills provision needs to be formalised and standardised. Fourthly,

YES is comprehensive in some respects (mentorship, work-experience, etc.), somewhat comprehensive in others (linking to different government departments and sectors), and a few aspects have limited comprehensiveness (psychosocial support). Fifthly, YES is to be commended particularly for the design of the programme and most parts of its implementation. However, there are still some challenges in some implementation stages (registration, etc.), and more evidence is needed on gender mainstreaming. In the next chapter, I discuss these results, which will provide findings positioned within the literature

## Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I will explain and discuss the results that are summarised on the next page. I will place the results in the context of existing literature and consider their implications, considering my epistemology of Critical Realism (CR) and conceptual framework. By doing so, I aim to provide substantive, insightful, and conclusive findings that are rich, nuanced, evidence-based, and contextualised (Mason, 2002; Manicas, 2010; Ritchie, et al., 2013; Punch, 2014). This is in line with the chosen mixed methods research approach.

The literature review has highlighted the challenges faced by young Black women in navigating the labour market in South Africa and Gauteng (Youth Explorer, 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Youth Explorer, 2020). These women are disproportionately unemployed and often have care responsibilities (Benya, 2013; Malindi, 2016; Fredericks & Yu, 2018; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; Stats SA, 2020). The literature also suggests that comprehensive youth employment interventions are more effective (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). This underscores the importance of discussing the comprehensiveness of the Youth Employment Service (YES).

The conceptual framework highlighted the traditional argument put forward in most Western theory: youth transition from childhood (financial dependence, living with parents etc.) to adulthood (financial independence, marriage, and parenthood etc) by moving from school to a job (Bynner, 2005; Honwana, 2014a). However, youth in South Africa, much like youth globally, transition from childhood to adulthood in ways that are non-linear, complicated, and full of disruptions (Bynner, 2005; Bray, et al., 2010). This leads to waithood: a state of unsuccessful transitions (Honwana, 2014b). The chosen definition of youth development draws from Sen's (1999) theory of development as expansion of capabilities. It therefore views youth development as the removal of 'unfreedoms' in youth's lives (i.e. constraints in social, economic, and political life) and expansion of their capabilities. This is why it is important to discuss if YES is youth developmental.

It is worth noting that the sample of 20 participants is not representative of the wider population of young Black women or youth in the intervention. So, for validity, the results in [Chapter 4](#): summarised below, can be tested on a bigger sample. Below, I present a summary of the main results from the previous chapter, as answers to the sub-questions of the study.

1. sub-question 1: What were the demographics and needs of young people before YES?

*The participants were unmarried with at least one dependant. They lived in townships. They faced high poverty and unemployment rates, even though most had post-matric qualifications. They needed skills, information, productive social capital, and psychosocial support.*

2. Sub-question 2: What are the skills provided by YES using the criteria developed?

*YES effectively provides soft skills to participants through modules, online games, and the hub. The host companies effectively provide hard skills through induction, Work Integrated Learning, and mentorship. The soft skills provided are skills in job-searching, interview, work-readiness, psychosocial skills, basic literacy and numeracy, networking and interpersonal skills, leadership, and communication skills. The hard skills include mechanical skills, technological skills, computer literacy, business skills and other hard skills. However, the approach to skills provision is neither formalised nor standardised and it needs improvement.*

3. Sub-question 3: How comprehensive is YES using the criteria developed from literature?

*YES is comprehensive in providing mentorship, psychosocial support (at LMC), social capital, work-experience, skills, reduction of costs and connection to secondary education. These aspects are neither formalised nor standardised. There is room for improvement. Also, YES is somewhat comprehensive in its psychosocial support (at TCC and YES HQ), and in how it links youth to private sector and government departments. However, its comprehensiveness is limited when it comes to connecting youth to primary schools, tertiary and other sectors.*

4. Sub-question 4: How does YES meet youth's needs?

*This question will be answered on this chapter (specifically in section 5.2).*

5. Sub-question 5: How does YES differ from previous GBP YEs using the six types of YEs?

*This question will also be answered on this chapter (specifically in subsection 5.3.1).*

6. Sub-question 6: How commendable and challenged is YES?

*The design of YES is to be admired because it allows for a smooth and logical flow of the implementation of the work-placement programme. YES should also be lauded for its skills provision, mentorship programme, works experience opportunity and reduction of job-searching costs for youth. It is also noteworthy that YES offers social assistance to the community where the hub is. However, YES mismatched the participants' wishes with placement at times. There was also a lack of leadership at Tembisa hub earlier on in the programme. Also, YES must improve the way it communicates with placed youth.*

The main aim, therefore, is to discuss these results and answer the research question, "How comprehensive is the South African Youth Employment Service intervention and what skills does it provide to young Black women from low-income communities in Gauteng?" As will be seen, in this chapter, I argue the thesis of this paper: YES is comprehensive and provides hard and soft skills effectively; as youth developmental as YES is, it must be improved. I will argue this in three parts:

§5.1. Before joining YES, the participants had multiple struggles and needs that rendered them in a state of waithood. That is why YEs like YES – which must be youth developmental – are important. i.e. This will complete the answer for sub-question 1.

§5.2. YES is comprehensive and provides skills effectively. Therefore, YES meets participants' needs, which makes YES youth developmental. i.e. This will expand and complete the answers for sub-questions 2 and 3, and answer sub-question 4.

§5.3. YES is commendably better than previous GBPs. Still, YES has room for improvement. This section will answer sub-question 5 and complete the answer for 6.

## 5.1 The need for YEI that are make youth developmental

The results in section 4.1 partially answered sub-question 1. They showed the demographics of the participants (townships residents, long-term unemployment etc.) and needs (skills and psychosocial support). Below, I will discuss these results to advance the following arguments about this sub-sample of disadvantaged youth in SA, i.e. young Black women from low socio-economic backgrounds:

- 5.1.1 Participants are in a state of waithood because of geography.
- 5.1.2 Participants are in a state of waithood because of labour market failures.
- 5.1.3 Participants are in a state of waithood because of care responsibilities.
- 5.1.4 The participants' needs may have contributed to their state of waithood.

These arguments are building up to my first main argument that before YES, the participants were socio-economically disadvantaged and had multiple needs which might have led to them being in a state of waithood. This state of waithood makes clear the need for youth developmental YEIs. This is the complete answer for sub-question 1.

### 5.1.1 *Geography explains waithood and makes clear the need for youth developmental YEIs*

The results demonstrated that most participants live in townships (Soweto, Alexandra, Soshanguve and Tembisa). Most of the participants live as informal renters in formal settlements with 2 or more people (including themselves). This mirrors what is known from literature: most youth live in townships in Gauteng (e.g. Soweto, Tembisa, Alexandra and Soshanguve) and they stay in formal settlements (Youth Explorer, 2020). The results further showed that most of the participants are socio-economically disadvantaged, their households have an average total household income of less than R5,000 pm, and they mostly relied on social protection with some wage income – even though the households sought different sources of income. These results are consistent with what is already known about SA households that they lack wage income; SA youth themselves lack sustainable sources of income; and without social protection most households would most likely be in extreme poverty (Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Mosoetsa, 2011; Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). This also supports the mutually reinforcing link between poverty and unemployment in SA (Fourie & Leibbrandt, 2012). The results confirm that social protection and employment are key in fighting poverty (Altman, et al., 2014). Moreover, these results shows that the participants had low economic capital (Bourdieu, 1985).

The results show that the townships where these participants come from lack opportunities, including jobs (which are found in distant central business districts). This supports literature that geography still determines employment outcomes even in post-apartheid SA (Bray, et al., 2010; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). This also confirms literature about high costs incurred by Black youth for simply searching for jobs e.g. travel costs, CV printing costs etc. (Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). This makes

geography a disabling structure in the labour market for these participants (Carter & New, 2004). Note, these participants were unemployed and depended on their families, i.e. they were in a state of waithood. Therefore, geography may be one of the factors that contribute to youth's state of waithood.

This then means in order to fight the poverty in these households and areas, there may be a need for employment (including youth employment) to ensure that youth's economic capital is increased. This makes clear the need for YEIs that ensure that participants enter the labour market. In this case such YEIs need to remove the disabling structure of geography for participants, which will open up opportunities for youth, i.e. a youth developmental YEIs. For such YEIs to be effective, they must target youth in the townships. To complicate this, it is worth noting that existing evidence still suggests rural youth are more socioeconomically disadvantaged than township youth (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). Also, worth noting: one way of removing the disabling structure of geography is by having YEIs that will be reducing or eliminating the costs of job-searching for youth.

### *5.1.2 Labour market failures explain waithood and show the need for YEIs*

The results show that some of the participants are first-generation graduates in their families. This support the evidence of youth being generally more educated than their parents in SA (Mlatsheni, 2014; Graham, et al., 2016). This is a promising result that fails to support the evidence that most socio-economically disadvantage youth struggle to access post-secondary education and training (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). The results showed that participants wanted skills such as computer literacy. This result supports literature that youth are motivated and driven (De Lannoy, et al., 2018) to seek technological skills which are shown to be valuable in the labour market (Mlatsheni, 2014).

The results of having highly educated youth who seek more skills, speaks to the evidence that the education system in SA ill-equips youth and does not provide them with relevant and needed skills in the labour market (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). This further supports the evidence of skills mismatch in SA (Mlatsheni, 2014; Mkhize, 2018; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). The results further confirm that youth have complicated and disrupted transitions from school to the labour market in SA (Bynner, 2005; Bray, et al., 2010; Honwana, 2014a; Honwana, 2014b). In this case this is a consequence of the deficient education system in SA which places youth in a state of waithood. So, as a result of skills mismatch youth are in a state of waithood.

Most the participants were unemployed for a long time before YES. This confirms studies that show long term unemployment is typically found among youth in SA (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Concerning, a significant number of the participants never worked before YES. This supports evidence that youth

struggle even to enter the labour market (Altman, et al., 2014; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Also, most participants had under two years of work-experience before YES, which confirms the literature that youth struggle to gain work-experience (ibid). Interestingly, a majority of the participants had some tertiary education – strong human capital (Bourdieu, 1985) – but they were still unemployed. This counters literature that high education levels are favoured by the labour market (De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). This requires further examinations with a larger sample.

The results show that employers (or host companies) were impressed by these participants once they spoke to them. For instance, [Gloria's experience with the client engagements](#) (i.e. potential employers) shows that, given the chance, some highly educated participants may impress employers with their professional skills and demonstrable knowledge among other skills. They do so in ways that the participants noted as countering employers' perceptions of what a 'YES youth' (i.e. youth that was unemployed for 6 months) should look or sound like. This supports the research that shows employers perceive youth as being inexperienced and unskilled (Reddy, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018) but from the perspective of the unemployed. So, employer's perceptions may also account for youth's state of wait-hood.

YES claims to target youth who are looking for employment and have been unemployed for at least 6 months (SABPP, 2018b). The results supported this: before joining the YES programme, participants were unemployed for more than 6 months. This is unsurprising because youth unemployment is not only high in SA (41.5%), but also in Gauteng (33%) and in all four townships where the participants come from: Tembisa (40%), Alexandra (39%), Soweto (44%) and Soshanguve (47%) (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; Stats SA, 2020; Youth Explorer, 2016). Literature also shows that young women and Black youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment in SA, particularly young women are disproportionately unemployed in Gauteng (Benya, 2013; Malindi, 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Fredericks & Yu, 2018; Youth Explorer, 2020). Also, it's already known that youth-hood, Blackness and gender (even though they are social constructs) have material consequences in the SA labour market (Du Bois & Eaton, 1899; Magubane, 1979; Magubane, 2007; Flanagan & Syvertsen, 2006; Moffett, 2008; Bray, et al., 2010; Oduwole, 2015). So, the young Black women in this study mirror unemployment realities of youth in SA and Gauteng. Therefore unemployment is a contributing factor to these youth's wait-hood.

The results also showed that the participants had low earnings before joining YES. Those who had some work-experience before YES, used to earn less than R5,000. This is better than the average youth earnings seen in Gauteng, COE, and COJ of R2,450 (but not in COT of R4,775) (Youth Explorer,

2016). This is to be expected since the participants are more educated (more than half of them have some tertiary education) than the youth in Gauteng (15% have some tertiary education) and all the townships: Alexandra (5%), Tembisa (7%), Soweto (8%) and Soshanguve (9%) (Youth Explorer, 2020).

The regression analysis in the results revealed that an increase of work-experience by a year is expected to add R2,372.3 to the participants' income. An increase in one level of education (from below matric to matric or matric to some tertiary education) is predicted to add R4,192.2 to participants' income. An investment in one level of education is associated with an increase 1.419 years in work-experience. However, these relationships must be tested with a larger sample. This supports the literature that shows more educated youth are favoured in the SA labour market or are offered more opportunities for work-experience (Reddy, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). However, lack of work-experience reinforces unemployment (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). So, a labour market that does not offer participants with less education the opportunity to get work-experience is worsening their employment prospects and render them in a state of waitness (Bynner, 2005; Bray, et al., 2010; Honwana, 2014a; Honwana, 2014b)

The results demonstrated that the participants are ethnically and multilingually diverse. This is consistent with demographic data that shows Gauteng is the most ethnically diverse province in SA and Black people are the most multi-lingual racial group (Stats SA, 2011; South African Government, 2020). The participants mostly speak Nguni or Sotho-Tswana languages. This confirms the lingual diversity of youth in Gauteng (Youth Explorer, 2020). This diversity gives participants cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985). However, the fact that they were still unemployed even with this cultural capital, contradicts Alshenqeti & Alsaedi (2012) that multiculturalism and multilingualism give youth an advantage, including in the labour market. So, youth were in waitness despite having cultural capital, because of the pervasiveness nature of unemployment in SA.

Already literature has shown that skills providing YEIs and work-experience centred YEIs are impactful and recommended (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; De Lannoy, et al., 2018) and must be considered a steppingstone to sustainable employment (Mlatsheni, 2014). So, to break the poverty and unemployment chain among youth, there is a need for YEIs that offers skills relevant for the labour market and work-experience.

### *5.1.3 Care-work explains waithood and show the need for youth developmental YEIs*

The results demonstrated that most participants are unmarried, have at least one dependant, and a significant number of them are mothers. These results mirror evidence in Gauteng that about a quarter of young women are mothers and similar results are observed in all the metropolises: COE (27%), COJ (24%) and COT (23%) (Youth Explorer, 2020). Further, the results showed that participants provide many forms of care: domestic labour, emotional support, provide financially when they are employed etc. This supports the literature that argues that women are caregivers (domestically, physically emotionally etc.) and women ‘take care of’ of their families and communities (financially among other ways) (Tronto, 1994; Urdang, 2006; Shefer, 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). The fact that these participants, who are caregivers, were also unemployed may support literature: social expectations of care disadvantage women in the labour market (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Malindi, 2019). The resources (time and money) that participants could have invested on career progression or improving their human capital to increase their chances of securing employment and bettering their lives (even though other women may choose otherwise) are redirected to care-work. So, care-work may be one of the factors that account for these participants’ state of waithood.

The results also showed that participants have both positive and negative feelings about care. These results confirm theories about ‘Black tax’ being seen as both a blessing and a burden by Black South African (Mhlongo, 2019; Msibi, 2020). Also, these results about care giving (although without a comparator) are consistent with what is known about gendered care, i.e. it has the double burden of paid labour (needed for providing) and unpaid labour (from social expectation) (Urdang, 2006; Shefer, 2014; Helman & Ratele, 2016). So, care may be a disabling structure for youth. In order to improve the employment outcomes of these participants, there is a need for YEIs that can remove alleviate youth from the burdens of this possibly disabling structure and provide participants with more freedoms, i.e. youth developmental YEIs. Such YEIs can for example provide free or subsidised ECD for young mothers.

### *5.1.4 The participants’ needs explain waithood and the need for youth developmental YEIs*

The results demonstrated that the participants lacked self-esteem and self-confidence, before joining YES, that is, they had low symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1985). This finding supports literature that youth need psychosocial support (De Lannoy, 2018). Also, the participants communicated not having ‘right connections’, i.e. they have limited productive social capital (Bourdieu, 1985). By showing that young Black women (specifically) have limited productive social capital, this result deepens the evidence that Black youth lack productive social capital (De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Graham, et al.,

2019). However, for some participants, the results showed that the word ‘connections’ came with negative connotations. Perhaps participants do not understand the difference between ‘connections’ as productive social capital and ‘connections’ as nepotism or ‘negative social capital’. The latter is uncontrolled and unaccountable ‘linking social capital’ (Baquero, 2015; Claridge, 2018; Graham, et al., 2019); the former is perfectly acceptable. Further the participants did not know that they can contact their ward councillor if they need a job until one participant explained this. The explanation aligns with SALGA’s (2011) view: councillors must meet the needs of their communities through development projects, and seek and create employment opportunities for the communities. Evidently, other participants lacked this information. Generally, the results showed that participants lack information about the labour market and its dynamics. Since, these participants were unemployed, it is reasonable to deduce that the lack of productive social capital and information may account for their unemployment. To move the participants out of waithood to adulthood, there is a need for YEIs that offer information, productive social capital, and psychosocial support.

#### 5.1.5 Conclusion of section

Despite high educational achievement and some cultural capital, youth did not transition out of the state of waithood to adulthood (financial independence and employment) (Bynner, 2005; Bray, et al., 2010; Honwana, 2014a; Honwana, 2014b). The factors that contributed to participants’ waithood are geographic location which acts as a barrier to accessing opportunities, unemployment which is caused by labour market failures such lack of work experience, care responsibilities which take time and resources away from female youth, and the participants’ needs for information among others. This answers sub-question 1.

This shows the importance of YEIs that can provide youth with new pathways, mitigate against the drivers of unemployment, and meet youth’s needs for reduction in job-searching costs, work-experience, alleviation of care responsibilities, information, productive social capital, and psychosocial support. Evidence supports a call for YEIs that provide comprehensive support, work-experience, and on-the-job training among other things (ILO, 2012; Branson, *et al.*, 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham, *et al.*, 2016; Branson, *et al.*, 2018; De Lannoy, *et al.*, 2018). In conclusion, this section answers sub-question 1. That is, before YES, the participants were socio-economically disadvantaged and had multiple needs which may have led to them being in a state of waithood. This state of waithood makes clear the need for youth developmental YEIs.

## 5.2 YES is comprehensive and provides skills, and thus meets the needs of youth

The results in section 4.3 and 4.4 partially answered sub-questions 2 and 3 respectively – sub-question 4 is yet to be answered. The results showed that YES provides soft skills through modules on the app, online games, and workshops at the hub. The soft skills provided are psychosocial skills, communication skills, networking skills, leadership skills, basic literacy, and numeracy (incl. financial literacy), computer literacy, work-readiness training, workplace conduct training, interpersonal skills, and job-searching skills. The host companies provide hard skills to participants through induction, work-integrated learning (WIL), and mentorship. The hard skills provided are mechanical skills, technological skills, and business skills among others. The results also show that YES is comprehensive when it comes to offering mentorship, psychosocial support (only at LMC), social capital, work-experience, skills, reduction of job-searching costs, and connecting participants to secondary education. Using these results which I discuss below, I advance the following arguments about this sub-sample of disadvantaged youth in SA, i.e. young Black women:

- 5.2.1 The somewhat comprehensive delivery of psychosocial support makes YES youth developmental.
- 5.2.2 The comprehensive provision of mentorship and social capital makes YES youth developmental.
- 5.2.3 The provision of effective skills makes YES youth developmental.
- 5.2.4 The comprehensive provision of work-experience makes YES youth developmental.

These discussions are building up to my second main argument that the YES programme – in its comprehensive parts and in its effective skills provision – meets participants' needs and it is therefore a youth developmental YEI. This is the complete answer for sub-questions 2, 3 and 4.

### 5.2.1 *Somewhat comprehensive psychosocial makes YES youth developmental*

YES aims to support unemployed youth (SAIIA, 2018). The results substantiate this claim. Indeed, the participants felt that they had more supportive structures after being part of the programme than before. The participants communicated that YES indirectly provided them with psychosocial skills effectively, which is somewhat comprehensive based on the assessment done in the results (section 4.3.4). Literature identified psychosocial support as one of the ingredients needed in comprehensive YEIs (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Also, YES's psychosocial skills that are meeting participants needs for psychosocial support by providing symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1985), in the form of self-confidence and self-esteem. This finding deepens the evidence that YEIs may address indirectly youth unemployment's accompanying issues such as youth desperation and depression (Lund, et al., 2013; Branson, Hofmeyr and Lam, 2014; Branson, et al., 2015; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Mngoma, et al.,

2020) through psychosocial support. In so doing, the YES work-placement programme is removing disabling structures (Carter & New, 2004) such as feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. YES is expanding freedoms (Sen, 1999) for participants to believe in themselves and their abilities. On this regard, YES is youth developmental.

However, the participants thought YES could improve its psychosocial support by providing a mental health expert to be responsible for psychosocially supporting youth. A therapist, youth care-worker or social worker indeed would be of benefit, considering the background of the youth who apply for YES. The results also show that LMC has comprehensive psychosocial support which includes yoga, mindfulness training, and therapy sessions. Perhaps LMC is attentive to youth's needs because it is located within youth's community (it neighbours the YES hub in Tembisa) and it is exposed to the daily challenges that youth face living in Tembisa. This supports literature that locally based YEs tend to be more accessible and impactful (Graham, et al., 2016). YES must learn from LMC how to offer direct psychosocial support based local challenges. That will strengthen its youth development.

### 5.2.2 Comprehensive provision of mentorship and social capital makes YES youth developmental

YES claims to provide mentorship and coaching through an identified senior and qualified person (SABPP, 2018a). The results support this as seen at host companies, where there were mentors who are also supervisors to the participants. This provided participants with what literature calls bridging social capital (Claridge, 2018) between senior staff members and these participants. However, the quality of the mentorship varied in different host companies. At TCC the mentorship programme was somewhat comprehensive; participants only discussed skills provision with their mentors. Unfortunately, the mentors at TCC also took out their frustrations on participants, lacked patience, and compared them to each other. This behaviour is something that YES needs to safeguard against at the host companies, in order to ensure youth development is promoted.

In contrast, YES HQ provided a comprehensive mentorship programme, with participants having multiple mentors to meet their various needs: personal advice (on love life, parenting, mental health problems etc.) and professional advice (on skills needed, career development etc.). However, LMC should be the best practice for the mentorship programmes. Not only did the mentor at LMC provide personal and professional advice to participants, but the mentor also supported participants who struggled during interviews for the work-placement programme, explained the work-placement contracts in detail, and coached participants when the need arose. The mentor at LMC also developed participants' leadership skills and teamwork. This makes the mentorship programme at LMC youth

developmental and more impactful. However, these varied mentorships at the host companies are why it is important for YES to have a standardised and formalised mentorship programme for all host companies to follow.

One of YES's aims is to provide connections to youth (SABPP, 2018a). The survey results support this claim because most of the participants found useful networks (mentors etc). Also, they were connected to the education system – especially secondary school to rewrite matric – and assisted with obtaining learner's and driver's licences. However, it seems like only the participants placed at the LMC were provided information (at the hub in Tembisa) about the learner's and driver's licences. However, money is a challenge to rewriting matric and getting driver's licence and therefore a disabling structure (Carter & New, 2004) for these participants. Fortunately, YES showed willingness to assist with fees, providing materials for the learner's licence test, and referring these participants to affordable local-driving schools.

So, YES met the needs identified in literature: mentorship, rewriting matric and linking youth with government departments and other sectors in society (ILO, 2012; Branson, et al., 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Branson, et al., 2019). In so doing YES removed disabling structures (lack of information about careers, need for skills, lack of mentors and connections, lack of money etc.) by providing productive social capital in the form of mentors and improved human capital through schooling. YES also strengthened the participants' agency to obtain matric and driver's licences. This is expanding the participants choices and their freedoms (Sen, 1999; Carter & New, 2004). In this regard, YES is youth developmental.

### 5.2.3 Provision of effective skills makes YES youth developmental

YES claims to encourage host companies to expose youth to different aspects of the company and develop a variety of skills (SABPP, 2018a). There was no evidence of direct provision of career development by either using a career counsellor or providing information about different careers to youth. The results support this claim because limited career development was offered through informal conversations, the modules and the net-games, and rotating participants in the different departments in a host company. The results do however show that not all the participants were rotated. So, this rotation must be encouraged among all youth, especially those youths who do not have specialist skills or training, i.e. not lawyers, accountants etc. Nonetheless, these results show that YES took the recommendation from literature to have career development as part of a YEI (Branson, *et al.*, 2018; De Lannoy, *et al.*, 2018). However, the career development must be standardised for all participants.

Additionally, the results show how that the career development, as limited as it was, it was effective because the participants said that they have clearly formulated career goals and action plans on how to achieve them; they know what they want to accomplish in their career; and they set challenging career targets for themselves. This is something they felt like they could not do before the YES programme. In so, doing YES removed a disabling structure (lack of career development). YES strengthened participants' agency and opened up their freedoms (Sen, 1999) in the labour market by opening up career options for them. In that way, YES is youth developmental.

YES aims to provide work-readiness skills to youth (YES, 2018). The results support this. Through online games, modules in apps and preplacement workshops at the hub, YES directly provides work-readiness skills and other soft skills: psychosocial skills, workplace conduct skills, job-searching skills, basic literacy and numeracy, financial literacy, interviewing skills, communication skills, networking skills, interpersonal skills, leadership skills and teamwork skills. These results show that YES is offering employability skills and the other skills identified as being relevant and needed in the labour market in SA (ILO, 2012; Branson, et al., 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Branson, et al., 2019). However, only TCC-placed and YES-HQ-placed participants were offered professional writing skills. This makes sense, the youth at TCC work in corporate business where writing professionally is a required skill; the youth at YES HQ work in an environment that requires good writing skills. While the youth at LMC do little to no writing as part of their job in manufacturing. Also, the interview training seems to not be effective to some participants, as the results show that they struggled with interviews. This limits the effectiveness of the skills provision and therefore the youth developmental aspect of the skills provision.

YES aims to provide on-the-job training to youth (YES, 2018). The results support this. Indirectly, through the host company using the induction, WIL and mentorship, YES provides hard skills: mechanical skills, entrepreneurial skills, technological skills (including computer literacy skills) and other skills like training in Early Childhood Development (ECD), graphic design, project management, marketing, business, accountancy, train-the-trainer, technical IT, and data analysis. These results show that YES meets participant's needs for skills, which the participants highlighted and also literature highlight can be addressed through on-the-job training (Mlatsheni, 2014; Graham, *et al.*, 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). I suggest that this be formalised for all the host companies.

YES is removing a disabling structure for these participants (lack of skills) through the provision of skills and strengthening their human capital (giving them freedoms). So, YES is youth developmental.

#### *5.2.4 Provision of comprehensive work-experience makes YES youth developmental*

YES claims to integrate unemployed youth into the labour market by placing them and aims to provide work-experience (SAIIA, 2018; SABPP, 2018). The results support this claim because participants gained work experience through the work-placement programme. This means YES is doing exactly what the literature recommends, i.e. being a YEI that is a work-experience programme (Altman, et al., 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Since, the lack of work-experience is a disabling structure for participants in the labour market, the provision of comprehensive work-experience by YES is expanding participants' freedom. So, YES is youth developmental on this aspect.

The results reveal that YES reduces various job-searching costs for youth (free Wi-Fi at the Tembisa hub for all youth) and other costs (loaned Mobi-cells for all placed-youth) to access modules. Also, YES provides incentives for all placed youth (electricity and airtime vouchers) for finishing modules. All these coupled, addresses youths' needs which are identified in literature such as high data costs and job-searching costs, which negatively impact youth's job-searching abilities (Graham, et al., 2016; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). Also, the findings show that these participants struggle with poverty like other youth in SA and Gauteng (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; Youth Explorer, 2020) and have to pay Black Tax just like other Black people in South Africa (Mhlongo, 2019; Msibi, 2020). So, these incentives on top of the monthly minimum wage, reduce the burden of poverty and Black Tax on youth. YES is therefore removing disabling structures (financial burden) and it is affording participants the freedom to search for jobs. This makes YES youth developmental.

#### *5.2.5 Conclusion of section*

YES provides hard and soft skills effectively (sub-questions 2's answer). YES is (sometimes somewhat) comprehensive in its approach to the programme (sub-question 3's answer). YES met youth's needs for skills, productive social capital, and reduction of job-searching costs indirectly (through the host companies) and directly (sub-question 4's answer). So, YES is youth developmental. However, there are parts of the work-placement programme that need to be strengthened e.g. career development, psychosocial support, and link to different departments and sectors. Many lessons (e.g. mentorship) for all the host companies can be drawn from the work-placement programme at LMC.

### *5.3 YES is be commended even though it has some challenges*

The results in section [4.2](#) reveal the details of the YES programme: from recruiting youth to giving youth the evidence of their participation in the programme. These results will be discussed here to answer sub-question 5. Additionally, the results in section [4.5](#) partially answered sub-question 6. They

show that YES does much commendable work for the participants and the community. Yet some aspects of the programme had challenges, especially in the commencement phase. Also, there is little evidence of gender mainstreaming in the programme. However, the participants made some recommendations, for instance, like YES should provide exit opportunities. Discussing these results, I complete the answers for sub-questions 5 and 6.

In this section, I advance the following arguments based on the data from these participants:

[5.3.1](#) YES is to be commended for being different from previous GBPs.  
(completes the answer for sub-question 5).

[5.3.2](#) YES is to be commended for exceeding its objectives.

[5.3.3](#) Gender mainstreaming must be improved at YES

[5.3.4](#) Some elements of YES need strengthening.

(together with [5.3.2](#) and [5.3.3](#), completes the answer sub-question 6)

These discussions are building up to my third main argument that YES is better than previous GBPs and commendable, but it needs to be strengthened. This answers sub-question 5 and 6.

### *[5.3.1 YES is to be commended for being different from previous GBPs](#)*

#### **Textbox: Evaluations and studies on previous GBPs**

Already existing evidence reveals useful insights about previous Government-Backed Programmes (GBPs). These insights, I will compare with this paper's findings on YES. One such insight is about the EPWP. Evidence shows that it provides some income, vocational skills, and work-experience as a steppingstone to employment (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; De Lannoy, et al., 2018). That makes the EPWP a job creation programme and also an employability programme. It also indirectly provides state-supported care work through the ECD specialisation of the programme, which trains childcare workers for ECD centres (Budlender & Lund, 2011). This is makes it a job supporting programme.

The CWP was found to be a short-term employment intervention that provides basic skills training and encourages savings through local stokvels (Dicks, et al., 2011). As a result, it can be labelled as a job creation programme, an employability programme, and a financial literacy programme. The NYS was found to provide work-experience and increase youths' employability skills, increasing their opportunities for work and actually improving their livelihoods (Graham, *et al.*, 2016). So, it is a job creation programme and an employability programme. Although NYS is run by the National Youth Development Agency, and therefore well-funded, bureaucracy has stifled its impact (ibid).

Remarkably, Graham *et al.* (2016) found that these intervention (EPWP, CWP and NYS) were locally based, therefore accessible, and less costly to young people; and the programmes spent more time on work-integrated learning (*ibid*). This therefore makes all of them job accessibility programmes. The EPWP, CWP and NYS, do little to nothing in terms of linking youth to different departments and different sectors to ensure better economic and labour prospects (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; De Lannoy, *et al.*, 2018); their participants had little interaction with potential employers (Graham, *et al.*, 2016). This means that they all fall short of being seen as job coordination programmes.

Much like all the GBPs in the textbox above (Graham, *et al.*, 2016), the results of this study show that YES provides job-searching and work readiness skills which makes it an employability programme. YES provides incentives and reduction of job-searching costs. This removes barriers (e.g. high data and travel costs) to the labour market. That makes YES a job accessibility programme too – similar to the above reviewed GBPs (Graham, *et al.*, 2016). Still, the incentives and reduction of job-searching costs need to be offered to all registered participants of YES. The fact that YES provides work-experience means it is a job creation programme, like all these previous GBPs (*ibid*). The results also showed that YES provides financial literacy training which makes it a financial literacy programme, like the CWP. This finding differentiates YES from some previous GBPs – NYS and EPWP.

However, the results also demonstrated that YES provides psychosocial support, which makes it a job-supporting programme (De Lannoy, *et al.*, 2018). This sets YES apart from the previous GBPs (except EPWP). Also, the type of social capital provided by YES, which links youth to different organisations (schools etc) and people, means YES is a job coordination programme unlike all the previous GBPs (Graham, *et al.*, 2016). Its job coordination is more like that of the European Union’s Youth Guarantee (EU-YG) (Mai, 2014) in that it links youth to the labour market and somewhat to the education system (e.g. secondary schools). However, unlike the EU-YG, YES is limited when it comes to connecting youth to the healthcare system and other sectors (e.g. civil society sector) – an area for improvement.

So, YES is more comprehensive in its approach than these GBPs because it is all 6 types of YEIs explored in this study. This makes YES a wide-ranging YEI than the previous GBPs.

### 5.3.2 YES is to be commended for meeting and exceeding its objectives

The results show that the work-placement programme is well designed. It follows 10 stages of implementation. This aligns with the 5 implementation stages identified by YES (2018) and the SABPP’s (2018a) first four stages of the YES work-placement programme. Unlike YES (2018), in this

study, screening is highlighted as a separate stage from the interviewing stage. This therefore means that YES, at the very least, delivers all the stages of the programme as promised.

YES claimed to provide skills, experience, connections, and a reference letter to youth (SABPP, 2018b). Indeed, the results support this claim and show that YES provided skills effectively, work-experience comprehensively, connections in a somewhat comprehensive way, and evidently a reference letter (as part of the portfolio of evidence together with an updated CV and certificates) will be given to participants. This shows that YES in its design responded to evidence from literature that reference letters, relevant skills, work-experience and productive social capital increase the chances of young people securing a job (Abel, et al., 2017; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Graham, et al., 2019). That makes the programme evidence based.

Not only did YES deliver its objectives but it assisted the community at the Tembisa hub by employing members of the Tembisa community for its restaurant. The hub also has a garden that the community can come and pick vegetables from. This all supports literature that locally based YEs are more impactful (Graham, et al., 2016). So, YES is expanding the community's freedoms by assisting socio-economically. Not only that but YES is removing disabling structures, such as poverty and unemployment for the community, and strengthening some of the community members' agency by providing them with food and employment. By exceeding its objectives, YES is not only youth developmental but it generally developmental.

### 5.3.3 Gender mainstreaming must be improved at YES

Despite young women being disproportionately impacted by unemployment in SA and Gauteng (Benya, 2013; Malindi, 2016; Fredericks & Yu, 2018; De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; Stats SA, 2020; Youth Explorer, 2020), the evidence from this study is that there is limited intentional gender mainstreaming in the YES work-placement programme. Perhaps it is there but as a male researcher, it fell on my blind spot or I did not do enough excavation to find the gendered experiences of the programme. So, this aspect still needs further research, especially with a bigger sample. In all the different phases of the implementation, it is important for YES to conduct a gender analysis in order to analyse how women and men will be impacted by different aspects of the programme and to consider their different or similar political, social, and economic contexts. This is what I do here.

The results show that some participants needed to show incredible amounts of agency to find out about YES because they were mostly at home doing their care responsibilities, while the YES information promotions were happening in the townships. Evidence already shows that youth lack of information

(De Lannoy, et al., 2018), however this result deepens that literature in that it helps explain why that may be the case for young Black women, i.e. care responsibilities may be forcing them to spend excessive amounts of time in the domestic space rather than in spaces where information may be made readily available. In order to access these women, the domestic space needs to be incorporated in planned information-giving spaces.

The results demonstrate that YES provided ECD training at the hub as part of the workshops. This is similar to the ECD training provided by the EPWP (Budlender & Lund, 2011). This training provided youth with skills and more information on how to be better child-carers in their professional lives (should they choose such a career) and/or parents (particularly mothers) to their children in their personal lives. In so doing, YES was strengthening the participants' caregiving skills. Since, women are socially expected to 'give care' (Tronto, 1994; Shefer, 2014), YES may be empowering female youth to give care more effectively and efficiently. This may assist them with the stress and even some lack of knowledge around child-rearing. Women are underpaid caregivers even when they have jobs (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Kwele, et al., 2015), but this professionalises their skills and unlocks their earning potential, should they pursue a career in the childcare industry.

The placement at YES may raise some questions about gender stereotyping. For example, a participant was mismatched to an administrative job despite having mechanical skills and enjoying being a mechanic. This aligns with social expectations that have been observed by scholars that jobs are gendered (Moffett, 2008) and that administrative jobs in contemporary and patriarchal society are stereotypically seen as feminine and safe; while jobs such as that of a mechanic's are seen as masculine and dangerous (Coyle & Liben, 2016). However, the placement programme also had a non-gender-stereotyped placement of participants at a manufacturing company (LMC). This is not quite the same placement procedure, however, because the results show that LMC explicitly and exclusively wanted women to be placed there. These participants did what may be socially seen as masculine jobs (Coyle & Liben, 2016), which is gender transgressive and progressive. So, gender bias during the placement stage needs to be further examined.

The results show that LMC is intentional in centring and integrating gender in its design and the implementation of the work-placement programme. LMC supported the participants it hosts during the interview stages and offered them psychosocial support (which may be seen as gendered work for women) among many distinguishing features. Also, LMC encourages the participants to bring their women experience to the workplace and who they are as women. Perhaps this is because LMC only wanted women to be placed there. Perhaps this explicitness about gender at LMC is a result of it

manufacturing female products, so it constantly considers women's needs. Since, women are socially expected to be caregivers and hardly ever expected to be care-receivers (Tronto, 1994; Shefer, 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Helman & Ratele, 2016), LMC is demonstrably gender transgressive and progressive by giving care to the participants it hosts, an unexpected finding.

The participants at LMC communicated building solidarity and supporting each other "as women" because of the mentorship programme that is instituted by their supervisor or mentor. This shows that the participants constructed their womanhood at work to incorporate being sisterly and caregiving to each other as women. This construction of womanhood as encompassing caregiving may fit into patriarchal stereotypes about women and femininity (Urdang, 2006; Shefer, 2014; Helman & Ratele, 2016). However this extension of that caregiving to include caring for other women, i.e. making other women care-receivers, may be something that is outside the patriarchal worldview. The sisterhood created here is what literature calls bonding social capital (Claridge, 2018), i.e. it is between youths in the same rank. Women have organised and supported each other before in *umanyano* or support groups in SA, in line with what literature calls 'feminist solidarity' (hooks, 1986; Hassim, 1991; Ngcobozi, 2020). So, there is some transgressive and feminist work that is going on at the LMC.

The results also show that the participants at LMC viewed *ukuba yimbokodo* ['to be strong as a rock'] – an African proverb exclusively intended for women – as having emotional intelligence, which they also see as a skill needed by good managers. In patriarchy 'ukuba yimbokodo' is a trope for women as strong humans for and to endure patriarchal abuse, while also being seen as a weaker gender (Madumo, 2019). The participants' construction of femininity such that it includes emotional intelligence and leadership – things that patriarchy associates with maleness (ibid) – is an aversion of this trope.

Contrary to the mentorship experience at LMC, the participants placed at TCC may have been neglected – even by female mentors. This shows that the mentorship programme did not have gender expectations for the female mentors or burdened them to care. However, the results show that participants placed at YES generally viewed their female mentors as "mother" figures who offered them advice on how to take care of their children among many things, while male mentors are not describe as "father" figures. So, the participants constructed these mentors in a way that attached the mentors' femininity to motherhood rather than seeing this advice about personal life as part of standard practice among mentors, i.e. they gendered their mentors (Moffett, 2008). This gendering might be showing that female mentors were caregivers to participants in ways that male participants were not. In that case, this shows that even at work women do care work which may be unrecognised by official performance measures, in this case emotional labour, even above their professional duties (Tronto,

1994; Urdang, 2006; Shefer, 2014; Graham, et al., 2019). So, assessing the mentorship and effectiveness should acknowledge and account for this gendered dynamic.

So, the mentorship programmes at the host companies reveals some gendered dynamics. While some host companies may have neglected gender-mainstreaming, I get the sense that LMC is intentional in its gender-mainstreaming. So, YES could learn from this. On the gender analysis on this paper, an area that is not explored and needs to be further researched is the safety of young women and men, especially as it relates to sexual violence or gender-based violence (both at home and also in the placement) and its impact on their programme outcomes.

#### *5.3.4 Some elements of YES that need strengthening*

The results in section [4.2](#) reveal that some aspects of the programme had shortcomings. The participants felt like YES did not honour what they wished to get from the programme. One participant specifically asked for computer training but was provided work-placement. This is counter to YES's claim that placement is based not only on the needs but also the desires of youth (SAIIA, 2018). In this regard, YES is neither respecting the agency of the participants nor expanding their freedoms (Sen, 1999; Carter & New, 2004), and this limits the youth development of the programme. Perhaps YES thought that the wishes of the participant would be honoured by the skills provided during the work-placement, including computer training. If that is the case, YES should communicate this clearly with the participants and show them how their wishes will be fulfilled by the programme. This will strengthen YES's youth development.

The results show that the participants registered with multiple recruitment agencies that are all partners of YES. It is clear that YES and the recruitment agencies did not communicate to the participants the nature of their relationship. Even though it may not have been YES's intension, but participants might have wasted limited financial resources (De Lannoy, et al., 2018) by applying for the same opportunity through different agencies. The lack of communication about this, is limiting the participants' agency (Carter & New, 2004) and does not extend any of their freedoms (Sen, 1999), which weakens the strength of YES' youth development. It may be prudent to inform youth about the nature of this relationship or share with them the list of YES's recruitment partners.

The results show that some participants did not obtain copies of their contracts. The results show that participants are unclear if the contract is a programme agreement. Some participants were also unclear about receiving the final deliverables of the programme, such as a reference letter. Clearly this speaks to a lack or asymmetry of information among the participants. This lack or asymmetry of information

among participants limits their agency, it does not offer them freedoms to act (Sen, 1999; Carter & New, 2004) and therefore reduces the strength of YES's youth development. So, YES must communicate with host companies to have copies of the contract issued to youth, clarify if these are programme agreements, and inform youth about what they are getting out of the programme.

The results show that the preplacement workshops are only available to participants who are close to hubs. This inconsistency is delivering the programme to youth regardless of their proximity to a hub, is limiting youth's agency and therefore the youth development of the programme. The results also show that Mobi-cells issuing is not well structured; the apps are sometimes not zero-rated or they have technical glitches. This reduces the efficacy of the skills provision through the modules because participants may not have the devices or data bundles to access the modules. This presents structures (need money to get devices and data bundles) instead of removing barriers for accessing the modules (Sen, 1999; Carter & New, 2004). This reduces the strength of the youth development of the skills provision. Perhaps YES rolled the programme out, without having had sufficient time to put all the tools in place. This was the pilot after all. In the future, YES should communicate these challenges with youth upfront to manage expectations.

The results show that YES HQ youth were initially placed at the then new hub in Tembisa but there were challenges such as lack of proper mentorship. This is understandable and to be expected because this was the pilot for the programme. However, as the results show, participants guided and mentored each other during their time at Tembisa. This demonstrates that despite not having a formal mentorship programme, participants are motivated agents even when faced by disabling structures (Carter & New, 2004) such as lack of leadership. A result that affirms the literature showing youth in SA are motivated (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). The fact that YES re-placed these participants at YES HQ upon discovering this, shows that the organisation learns from these challenges. This means YES as an organisation, uses its agency (Carter & New, 2004). That agency must continue being strengthened to ensure that YES is adaptable and continues to strengthen its ability to youth developmental.

The results also showed that participants identified the need for a more personalised check-up rather than the group meetings or individual surveys currently done quarterly. This result troubles YES's claim to support youth (SAIIA, 2018) and shows that even though the support is there, its quality may not be what the participants expect, want, or need. Participants might feel the need for more personalised support and connection with YES during the placement. Another result that may support this, is the fact that the youth placed at TCC had trust issues about speaking to me, even under explained anonymity. This might indicate a culture of identification and victimisation at TCC. Something that

YES must be looking out for when releasing youth to the care of host companies. The participants could have communicated any troubles that they might have experienced at TCC with YES, if YES had offered such personalised support. So, here YES is providing weak symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1985), i.e. psychosocial support. This then weakens the strength of the youth development.

Participants' search for employment and their receiving of rejection letters, coupled with their suggestion that YES provide them exit opportunities, might be communicating that these participants see YES as more than a YEI. It may be that they see YES as their only connection to the labour market. This signals a lack of productive social capital that results in employment as literature identified (Graham, et al., 2019). It also affirms the literature's identification that longer term employment is what youth want (De Lannoy, et al., 2018). This also communicates that these participants feel like they are faced with disabling structures (Carter & New, 2004) in the labour market and YES should intervene. This is linked to participants' suggestion that YES also place youth in local SMMEs. Such interventions could assist youth with securing long-term employment, indeed. To strengthen the youth development of the programme, YES should actively assist youth with applications for exit opportunities. Since literature already shows that it is common for youth to fall back into unemployment (De Lannoy, et al., 2018; Sulla & Zikhali, 2018; Branson, et al., 2019), this stage of securing exit opportunities should be an integral part of the programme.

### *5.3.5 Conclusion of section*

These findings explain that YES is to be commended for the work it does: the programme design is thorough and the programme is comprehensive in its skills provision, mentorship, work-experience, and reduction of job-searching costs. This is because YES met its objectives and exceeded them by going further to assist the community too. Also, YES is different from government-backed programmes (GBPs) in that its approach is comprehensive. Unlike GBPs, YES is all 6 types of YEIs.

However, as explained, YES needs to address some of its shortcomings: the pilot stage glitches such as little communication with participants at the Tembisa hub. Also, there is little evidence of gender mainstreaming in the programme. These and other shortcomings limit the youth development of the programme and therefore need to be addressed. YES must mainstream gender, improve the ties it has with participants during placement and strengthen its role post-intervention. The participants recommended that YES provides exit opportunities. These suggestions will enrich the programme.

## Conclusion of Chapter 5:

The discussion argued that participants before joining YES were in waithood as a result of their needs and backgrounds, which makes YEs like YES crucial for youth development. It argued that YES is comprehensive and effectively provides the skills that literature identified as needed in the labour market. [Figure 14](#) maps out the different aspects of the work-placement programme. Comprehensive is ‘\*\*\*’, somewhat comprehensive is ‘\*\*’ and limited comprehensive is ‘\*’. For the skills provision ‘\*\*\*’ means effective, ‘\*\*’ means ‘needs improvement’ and ‘\*’ means ineffective. YES met youth’s needs directly (modules in app and workshops at the hub) and indirectly through WIL at the host companies. The discussion argued that YES is youth developmental. It also argued that YES is better than previous GBPs; it is all the 6 types of programmes. YES is praiseworthy, but it has its challenges and there is room for improvement. In conclusion, YES is comprehensive, effectively provides skills that meet youth’s needs, and it is youth developmental but it must be improved.

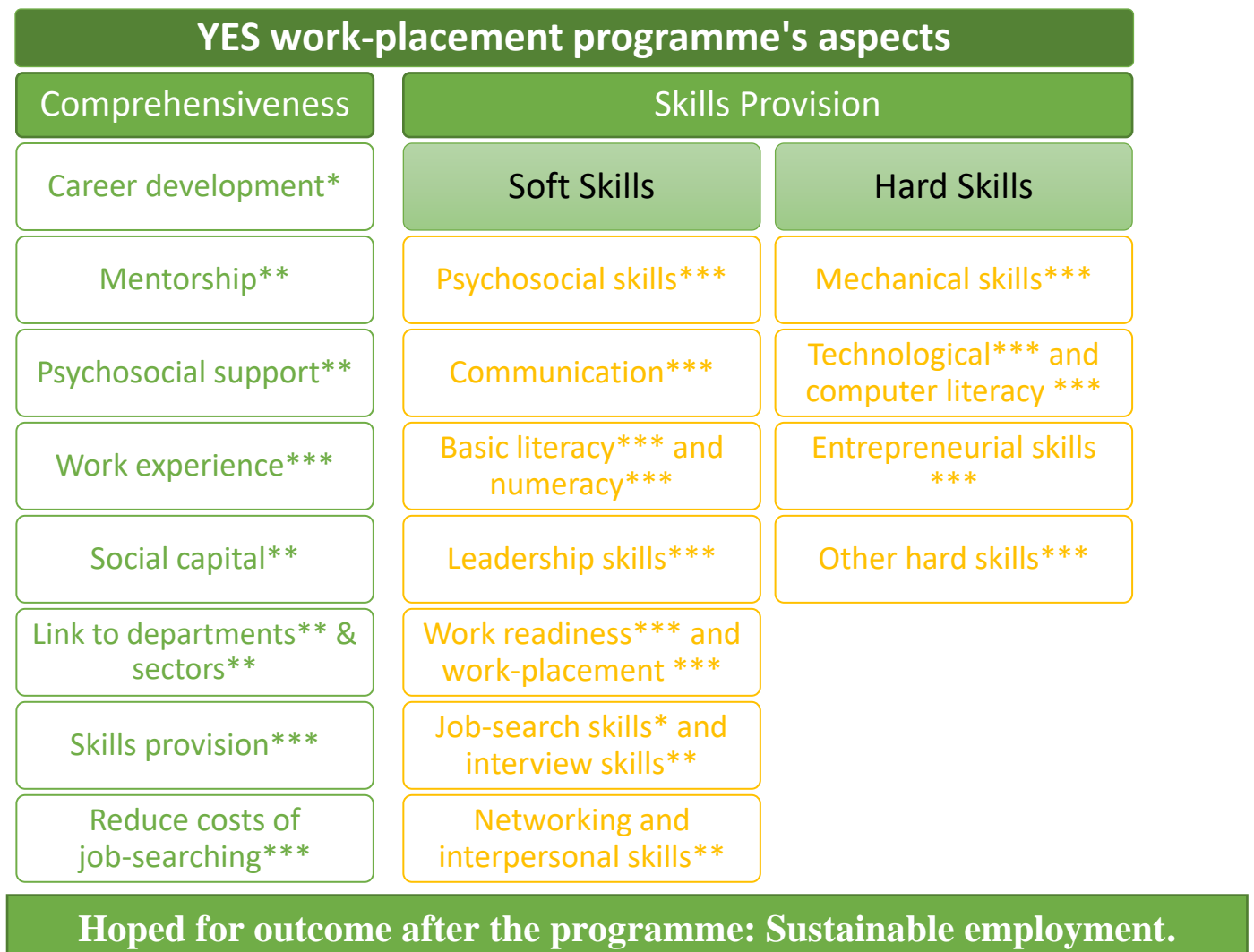


Figure 14: The design of YES’s work- placement programme.

The following chapter is the conclusion, which summarises the findings and make recommendations.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Youth employment interventions (YEIs) that address multiple needs of youth through support, guidance and training during placement, i.e. comprehensive approach, are shown to be more successful. This study used mixed methods to assess the comprehensiveness of the South African Youth Employment Service (YES). The aims of the study were to determine the needs of the participants, assess the comprehensiveness of different aspects of the YES work-placement programme and determine the skills that YES offers. The study also sought to explain how YES meets the needs of young people and how it compares to previous Government-Backed Programmes (GBP) of YEIs. The study was done before the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

I established the background, demographics and needs of the participants before joining the YES. The participants, like other youth in SA, are from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and are located in townships – a consequence of apartheid, which still negatively impacts them in the labour market since they are far away from economic opportunities. Atypical of youth in SA, the participants have strong human capital as indicated by their matriculation or post-matric education. They have cultural capital in the form of multilingualism, which is typical of people in Gauteng. However, they lacked skills needed by the labour market and were unemployed much like other SAn youth. This finding opposes the current evidence that more educated youth are more likely to be employed in SA.

Further, these participants had to provide care to their families just like other women in SA, which is one additional struggle they face, compared to their male counterparts, while navigating the labour market. They struggled to get into the labour market and had little to no work-experience, which mirrored the experiences of other youths in SA. As expected, the more educated participants earned more in their previous jobs before YES. However, common to all participants is that their households struggled without wage income. This affirmed the links of unemployment (perhaps through lack of skills and work-experience), inequality, and poverty in SA that many scholars have postulated.

All these findings showed that these participants, like other South African youth were in a state of waitthood. They had limited agency because of a lack of information and faced multiple disabling structures in the labour market like having little productive social capital. The paper argued that these struggles communicate a need for youth employment interventions (YEIs) that can strengthen youth's agency and assist youth (regardless of educational attainment) to navigate the labour market. It argued that these needs demonstrate the importance of YEIs that open new pathways for youth to move from

waithood to adulthood – signified by employment and financial independence. Therefore, these participants, their demographics and their needs show the importance of having YEIs like YES.

For such a YEI to be impactful, it must target youth in townships. Furthermore, the YEIs must centre on Black youth, of which YES is already doing. It must concentrate mostly on young women, with emphasis on young Black women. This way, such YEI can have a positive impact on youth's socio-economic status, assist and alleviate poverty, and combat inequality. However, the complexity of the issue means that a YEI like YES (among many) is only contributing to many efforts against youth unemployment.

The findings showed that YES is doing amazing work in a very challenging environment, especially since it is at its pilot stages. Its design is clear and well thought out, with 10 stages. Its implementation not only meets YES's claims to support youth, but it exceeds them through the provision of support and psychosocial skills. YES is offering mentorship and productive social capital, work experience, and more, which make it comprehensive. It provides hard skills through host companies and soft skills in-house.

All of this aligns with the NYP 2020's five aims:

- 1) Support and honing of youth's skills,
- 2) Increase youth's confidence,
- 3) Empower youth to be active agents,
- 4) Meet youth's needs and strengthen their networks, and
- 5) Promote the spirit of ubuntu. Therefore, YES is contributing towards the realisation of the NYP 2020.

YES is also providing social assistance to the wider community.

YES is similar to the previous government-backed programmes in that it is an employability programme, job accessibility and job creation programme. It is also a financial literacy programme like the NYS. However, YES is better than previous GBPs because it is also a job coordination programme (like the Youth Guarantee) and a job-supporting programme (like the EPWP). The paper argued that YES is comprehensive and provides skills effectively, YES meets participants' needs and therefore YES is youth developmental.

Nonetheless YES still needs to address some of the challenges and shortcomings identified. YES did not honour participants' wishes sometimes, like when a participants wanted training but YES placed the participant. There is a need to standardise and formalise aspects of the work-placement programme e.g. the career development, psychosocial support etc. Also, it needs to better how it connects youth to

the private sector, society, labour unions, government departments, tertiary education, and other opportunities. There is also a need for open communication lines and tighter monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This monitoring and evaluation can assist the NYDA and other government agencies to meet their mandate to monitor all programmes that aim to integrate the youth into the economy and society in general. So, the paper's thesis was that YES is comprehensive, provides skills effectively and youth developmental, however, it needs to be strengthened.

To strengthen the YES design, I recommend that YES develop a manual or policy on how all the stages of the programme are to be conducted, especially for the recruitment partners and host companies, to circumvent inconsistencies and reduce the chance of unduly favouring some youth over others. YES should list all its recruitment partners on its website to avert confusion and to ensure that youth do not register multiple times for the same opportunity. There must be someone assigned the responsibility of checking that unplaced youth are indeed receiving pre-placement training while waiting for interviews for placement. YES must keep track of the waiting period for placement and try to standardise it for youth (say 6 months from registration to placement).

YES must improve and communicate with youth its criteria for screening for interviews, e.g. That it will favour proactive youth who keep on following up, attending pre-placement training, updating their CVs etc. I recommend that the screening criteria consider and align the placement to 1) the skills of youth and 2) their passion or aspirations. Since YES works with socio-economically disadvantaged youth, it should compensate youth for their travel costs when they go for interviews. There must be a standard time (say within a day) of getting back to youth on the outcomes of the interviews and it must be communicated to youth.

I recommend that YES develops a standard contract and programme agreement for the placement of youth and the host companies can adapt it. YES must make it clear to host companies that youth are entitled to a copy of this. YES must encourage host companies to rotate youth in different departments during the placement, especially those youth who fall out specialist training (lawyers, accountants etc.) YES must encourage corporates, especially those that host youth who are post-matric graduates, to pay above the minimum wage. The government stipend for graduates can be used as a guideline.

To strengthen the work-placement programme, I recommend that YES standardise and formalise the work-placement programme building on the map in [Figure 14](#) (p.96) to create a theory of change that has different outcomes linked to specific programme actions. I also recommend that YES develops programme plans for each of the programme actions with input from host companies and using global

best practices. These programme plans must have clear roles and responsibilities for the different stakeholders. I recommend that YES develops concrete plans and guidelines for host companies on how to realise different aspects of the work-placement programme such as its comprehensiveness (limited career development, psychosocial support, mentorship, etc.) and skills provision (soft skills and hard skills). This will ensure buy-in from the host companies and will ensure that these aspects of the programme are integrated seamlessly within host companies. This will also strengthen the programme and ensure consistent programme impact or outcomes for youth irrespective of the host company or its industry.

YES must draw lessons from the Light manufacturing company (LMC), particularly on how to support youth. For that reason, I recommend that YES appoints a professional mental health expert (e.g. a therapist, youth care-worker or social worker) to provide psychosocial support. This can be either at group level or individual level. This expert can also deliver career development and refer youth to different departments and organisations for personal and professional development. They can also play the role of linking and communicating with youth on behalf of YES and, where it is appropriate, reporting on youth's experiences at the host companies. With the professional services being completely separated from the liaison responsibilities and youth being made aware of what and how it will be shared with YES. I suggest that YES develops a guide on mentorship or a standardised mentorship pack and train the mentors from the host companies on how to deliver mentorship to youth. I also suggest that YES develops criteria for host companies to identify senior and qualified individuals to mentor youth. This will minimise the disparities in mentorship delivery across host companies. More specific recommendations are in the action plan in [Table 18](#) below.

If YES expands, it should remain independent but partner with the Department of Basic Education (through local schools), Department of Higher Education and Training (through higher education institutions), the Department of Employment and Labour (through labour centres) and Department of Health (through local health facilities). This is because these institutions already exist across the nation and are somewhat accessible. New YES hubs can be established closer to labour centres for instance. The above may be preferred compared to partnering with the NYDA because of political and administrative challenges, and its inability to make different departments account for youth unemployment. Also, YES should consider contributing to the development of youth policy, particularly the latest National Youth Policy.

This study in its small way added to the scholarship about young Black women in the South African labour market. There is limited scholarship about YES and this research contributed some insights

about YES, its comprehensiveness and skills provision. This study also contributes to the scholarship about employability programmes, job creation programmes, job accessibility programmes, financial literacy programmes and job-support programmes and job coordination programmes. So, the paper answered the research question, “How comprehensive is the South African YES intervention and what skills does it provide to young Black women from low-income communities in Gauteng?” In its small way, YES provides skills effectively and is comprehensive in how it meets youth needs. This comprehensiveness needs to be strengthened, however.

The sample of 20 is small and there is sampling bias introduced by purposive sampling, i.e. high-skilled participants are overrepresented. The insights drawn, as limited as they are, will be useful to the YES intervention and add to literature. They can be further explored and validated using a more representative and larger sample for Black, female and/or youth. Also, the comparison of the before and after was done retrospectively in this study. So, a formal evaluation that looks at the before and after data among the same subjects (i.e. panel data) is needed and it must have an experimental group and a control group.

Furthermore, more studies need to be conducted to see if YES connects participants to primary schools, unions, national youth bodies or other sectors. The effectiveness of the job-searching skills YES provides needs to be studied too. More research is needed on the gender mainstreaming within the YES work-placement programme. For instance, travelling long distances very early in the morning or late in the afternoon may not be safe for women in SA. So, there is a need for studies that examine if there are considerations about women’s safety, motherhood, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, sexism, discrimination and abuse at work, workplace sexual harassment, and gender stereotyping in the YES programme. Also, youth’s experience of the YES business development needs to be explored too. Research needs to be done on the causality between skills, work-experience, and income inequality, for young Black women.

Table 18: Suggested action plan

Suggested action	Role	Timeline & Resources
<p><u>Enhance Design:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• list all YES recruitment partners on the YES website.</li> <li>• develop a manual or policy on how to implement programme (for host companies).</li> <li>• development a theory of change: with specific programme actions and how they are to be conducted linked to programme outcomes.</li> <li>• develops programme plans for each of the programme actions with input from host companies and using global best practices.</li> <li>• each programme plan must have clear roles and responsibilities for the different stakeholders.</li> <li>• develop implementation plans and guidelines for host companies.</li> <li>• develops a standard youth placement contract and programme agreement for host companies to build on.</li> </ul>	<p>Programme design team.</p>	<p>Implement within a year.</p> <p>Finance, time, and human resources.</p>
<p><u>Standardise and formalise work-placement programme:</u></p> <p>1. <i>Preplacement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop and communicate criteria for screening youth for interviews.</li> <li>• ensure youth are reimbursed for travel costs when they go for interviews.</li> <li>• enforce standard time (say a within a day) of getting back to youth on the outcomes of the interviews.</li> <li>• communicated pre -interview requirement:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ doing the interview training module.</li> <li>○ submission of documents and verification.</li> <li>○ attendance of workshops.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>2. <i>Placement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform host companies that youth are entitled to a copy of their contracts.</li> <li>• encourage host companies to rotate youth in different departments.</li> <li>• enforce graduate stipend.</li> <li>• ensure all youth receive incentives.</li> <li>• develop mentorship package and train the hosts &amp; mentors on how to deliver it.</li> </ul>	<p>Preplacement Officer (position may need to be created).</p> <p>Placement Officer (position may exist i.e. the quarterly visits person).</p>	<p>Implement within 6 months.</p> <p>Finance, time, and human resources.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• searching for opportunities for youth also local SMMEs.</li> <li>• linking to different departments and sectors</li> <li>• develop systems for youth to report their challenges at the host companies anonymously</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Create new role: Youth Worker to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide psychosocial support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ confidential individual therapy.</li> <li>○ confidential group sessions (e.g. mindfulness, yoga etc.)</li> <li>○ design the psychosocial skills training.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• provide career development.</li> <li>• refer youth to different departments and organisations for personal and professional development.</li> </ul>	<p>Create the position and hire a mental health expert: social worker, youth care-worker, therapist etc.</p>	<p>Implement within a year.</p> <p>Finance, time, and human resources.</p>
<p><u>Create new role: M&amp;E and Liaison Officer to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct monitoring and evaluation (M &amp; E) for the YES programme.</li> <li>• liaise with placed youth.</li> <li>• follow up with youth 3 months, 6 months and a year post the programme.</li> </ul>	<p>Finance, time, and human resources.</p>	<p>Implement within a year.</p> <p>Finance, time, and human resources.</p>

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Research participation request letter



University of Cape Town  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor School of Economics Building  
Middle Campus, Rondebosch  
Private Bag X3 · Rondebosch 7701  
Tel: #####

Web: <http://www.saldru.uct.ac.za>

9 October 2019

To:

Ms #####

Youth Stream Lead

Youth Employment Service

Dear #####

I am an Associate Professor/Chief Researcher at the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), and supervisor of Sociology student Lukhanyo Velelo (student number: VLLLUK001) at the University of Cape Town.

As part of the requirements of the MPhil in Development Studies, Lukhanyo needs to complete a mini dissertation. He is interested in youth development and youth employment and, as such, would be very interested to conduct a study on the South African Youth Employment Service (YES). In particular, Lukhanyo's aim is to understand the experiences of young Black women in Cape Town with the YES intervention and to explore whether the innovative YES approach is able to mitigate several of the barriers to employment and employability often encountered by large numbers of young Black women in the country.

I therefore write to ask your permission and support to contact Cape Town based corporates that are employing young people through the Youth Employment Service.

Attached is Lukhanyo's interview request, which sets out the aim and approach to the study in more detail, as well the university's ethics approval for the study.

Should you require any further details from us about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on below numbers.

Sincerely,

#####

Assoc Professor #####

Chief researcher, Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) University of Cape Town

Tel #####, Cell #####

Mail #####, Skype #####

---

“Challenging inequalities through policy relevant academic research.”

## Appendix 2: Consent form and ethics clearance report

	I am at least 18 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.	I have read been read and understood the information about the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The interviewer asked me for permission to record the conversation and made it clear that the recording will only be used for the process of transcribing my responses which he will use as data to analyse and nothing more.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I give consent to have the conversation recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I give consent for the data to be made public, with sensitive information and names anonymised or removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	The procedures regarding confidentiality and anonymity have been clearly explained to me. (e.g. my name will not be used, pseudonyms may be use where appropriate etc. and all information that can identify me, will be removed.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	If I terminate the interview, the interviewer explained that he will ask my permission to use the information provided prior to the end of the interview and he will comply with my decision as recorded below:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I did NOT terminate the interview.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I consent to allowing the interviewer to use information that was used before I terminated the interview.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I do NOT consent to allowing the interviewer to use information that was used before I terminated the interview.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I was informed about who I should contact (i.e. The Departmental of Sociology's Research Ethics Committee) if I have any concern with the research. (Tel: +27 (0)21 650 3501 OR Email: Soc-Sociology@uct.ac.za)	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I, along with the Researcher, agreed to sign, and dated, this consent form	<input type="checkbox"/>

*I, the undersigned, confirm that the consent form has been explained and I understand it as confirmed by ticking the appropriate boxes and signing below:*

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

To participate in the focus group, I would like you to sign also below please:

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please ask and keep a copy of this signed form for your own information.



## Department of Sociology

Room 4.35 • Fourth Floor  
Leslie Social Sciences Building  
Private Bag • Rondebosch 7701  
Telephone: +27 21 650 3501  
Fax: +27 21 689 7576  
Email: Soc-Sociology@uct.ac.za

04 October 2019

### Confirmation of Research Ethics Approval: Lukhanyo Velelo [SOC2019/19]

This is to confirm that Lukhanyo's research proposal, Assessment of the comprehensiveness and skills provided by South Africa Youth Employment Service, under the supervision of [REDACTED] has been reviewed by the Sociology Department. Mr Velelo's presented his proposal to the Department on 30 October 2018.

The Department is satisfied that the research carries no significant risk of harm to human subjects. We are further satisfied that appropriate informed consent and confidentiality/anonymity/data protection mechanisms are in place.

It is a condition for the acceptance of Mr Velelo's proposal that he complies consistently with strict ethical standards. This will entail proceeding only on the basis of the consistently informed consent of interviewees and will require regular monitoring of ethical issues which may emerge as the project develops.

Please contact the Department should you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

  
Lorraine Valentine

---

"OUR MISSION is to be an outstanding teaching and research university,  
educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society"

## Appendix 3: Interview request letter



### Invitation to be part of research

As a student at the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town in 2019, I (Lukhanyo Velelo, student number: VLLLUK001) am conducting a study on the **comprehensiveness and the skills provided by the South African Youth Employment Service (YES) initiative to young Black women in Cape Town**. The research will be supervised by #####. It is a mini dissertation as part of the requirements of the MPhil (Development Studies).

This study focuses on the YES intervention, which is an employment programme. It will focus on the work-experience or placement side of YES and not the business development aspect. I will sample 20 young Black women (African) and make use of a mini survey followed by FGDs of fives. I would like to survey you because you are/were part of the initiative in 2019.

The mini survey will be 30 minutes long as an individual task and the FGDs will be 1 hour 30 minutes long conducted face-to-face, both will be in English. I understand that language may be a challenge sometimes. However, I will be there to translate to you what you need help in isiXhosa and Afrikaans, Cape Town's official languages.

When we meet, I will ask questions about:

- Your background
- Your education and employment experiences
- Your household living conditions
- Your wellbeing and self-esteem
- Your income
- Your lifestyle
- Your opinions about your experience of the initiative: when you first contacted YES, the work-placement and what happened after your placement
- Whether you received: a reference letter, contacts, or people new to your network
- If you were linked to any government departments or other structures outside YES or your work-placement company
- About the skills training

If you agree to be part of the study, I will invite you to come to the university on the day of data collection. A venue will be booked on campus for 2 hours and 30 minutes. I will ask you to complete the mini survey online using Google Forms, for 30-45 minutes. If at any stage you need help I will be there to assist you. After that, we will have the FGDs for 1 hour 30 minutes each.

You will be reimbursed your transportation costs to the value of R100. Other than that, participating in the study will not cost anything, except your time. There are no specific benefits for participating

in the study, you will not be paid for example. However, the information you share will help me to assess if YES is comprehensive in its approach, and to determine the skills it provides to young Black women in Cape Town and determine how YES tailor-makes its approach to the needs of young people. This will help me to determine the successes and shortcomings in YES. This then may assist in strengthening what we know about the employment programme and could help improve the YES intervention, making it more comprehensive and to provide skills training in a better way, skills that speak to young people's needs.

Please know that you are free to participate voluntarily, and that you do not need to feel pressurised to partake just because you participated in the YES work-placement programme. There will be no penalty or repercussion if you do not. If you do choose to take part, we will protect your identity by anonymising the data we gather.

In addition, what you say will be kept confidential, between you and me (and my supervisor). In the focus group, I will establish some "ground rules" that we will all, within the group, agree on before running the discussion. I will only include extracts from our interview in my research thesis. However, I will ensure your anonymity by not using your real name in any of the documents. I will create an alias (nickname). Even, when I insert quotes of what you said, I will not use your real name but this alias.

If at any point, you feel that participating in this study is too personal, sensitive, or emotionally upsetting or uncomfortable, you can skip any questions you do not want to answer both in the survey and in the focus group. Also, I will refer you to other support services that you may need, should the need arise.

I ask for permission to record the focus group but I will not use or share the recordings with anyone else, except perhaps my supervisor. I use the recordings for the purposes of transcription only. I ask for consent to make the data (in the survey and interview transcripts) public for reuse in further research, but I commit to remove all sensitive information and anonymise the data before doing so. I will safely store your data and the sensitive documents.

I received funding from the South African Labour Development and Research Unit (SALDRU) to make this possible. The findings from the study will be submitted in my master's mini dissertation, as part of the requirements of the MPhil (Development Studies), with an English and isiXhosa abstract (summary). I will publish a working paper of the findings from the study and will forward you a summary that will be in English and isiXhosa. I will then publish two articles in English and isiXhosa in national newspapers after the thesis is marked and some peer-reviewed articles in academic journals after the thesis is marked. These are attempts to make the findings accessible to you and the public.

If you give me the permission to do so, please fill in the consent form at the end of this document? May you also please confirm that you are at least 18 years old?

If you have any questions about participating in the research, do not hesitate to contact Lukhanyo Velelo on VLLLUK001@myuct.ac.za or 021 650 5696 or 0790419769.

Assigned alias (Participant##), e.g. Participant 01-99	
---	--

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

## Appendix 4: Survey Introductory Note



### Introductory note

Hello

Thank you for being part of this study.

As a master's candidate at the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town in 2019, I (Lukhanyo Velelo, student number: VLLLUK001) am conducting a study on the **comprehensiveness and the skills provided by the South African Youth Employment Service (YES) initiative to young Black women**. The research will be supervised by Dr #####. It is a mini dissertation as part of the requirements of the MPhil (Development Studies). I would like to survey you because you are/were part of the initiative in 2019.

I have invited you to fill in this form (which takes about 45 minutes to an hour) and the consent form that I have given to you. Then we will meet shortly to discuss (for 30 minutes to an hour) with others. Please can I record the focus group discussion for my purpose of transcribing. I will not give YES the recording. The transcript will be anonymised, removing your names and any information that will result in you being identified.

Please note the response on the survey remain confidential between you, me (the researcher) and my supervisor. The discuss will not mention what you said in your survey responses.

Please come and ask me any questions you have the research or the survey. For concerns about the research, researcher, or his conduct, please contact the Departmental of Sociology's Research Ethics Committee on +27 (0)21 650 3501 OR Email: [Soc-Sociology@uct.ac.za](mailto:Soc-Sociology@uct.ac.za). This can be done anonymously.

Regards

Lukhanyo

## Appendix 5: Survey (Online)

The image shows a screenshot of an online survey form. At the top, there is a logo for 'yes YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE' with a stylized 'yes' in white on a yellow background. Below the logo, a green bar indicates 'Section 1 of 13'. The main content is divided into two sections: 'Personal Information' and 'Socio-economic information'. The 'Personal Information' section includes a prompt 'Please provide your personal information below:' and two input fields: 'Email address \*' with a 'Valid email address' error message and a 'Change settings' link, and 'Name and Surname (e.g. Abigail Khuzwayo) \*' with a 'Short-answer text' error message. The 'Socio-economic information' section includes a prompt 'Please answer the following questions, about yourself, as much as you can.' and a radio button question: 'Highest Education Level Achieved \*'. The options for this question are: 'No schooling', 'Less than primary completed', 'Primary completed', 'Grade 8 completed', 'Grade 9 completed', 'Grade 10 and grade 11 completed', 'Grade 12/Secondary/Matric completed', 'Post-Grade 12/Tertiary/Post-matric qualification/Undergrad qualification', 'Postgraduate degree (Honours/BTech or higher degree)', 'Refuse to answer.', and 'Don't know'.

1

<sup>1</sup> For more see: <https://forms.gle/WCFx9Tkd3mi9tupG9>

## Appendix 6: Data from survey

	CU	CV	CW	CX	CY	CZ	DA	DB	Other
1 Alan	Network - Family	Network - Mentor or sp	Network - Friends	Network - Community	Network - School (or hi	Network - Work (or Int	Network - Church	Network - Other organi	Other
2 Amy	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None
3 Bernie	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Many (10 or more people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Some
4 Clara	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	None/not applicable	None
5 Daisy	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	Very f
6 Emily	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None
7 Flora	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Some
8 Gloria	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None
9 Hannah	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very f
10 Ivy	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	Very f
11 Jane	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some
12 Kim	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Some (4-6 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None
13 Lily	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Many (10 or more people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very f
14 Mary	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None
15 Nancy	Many (10 or more people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Many (10 or more people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Many (10 or more people)	Many (10 or more people)	Some (4-6 people)	Some
16 Olivia	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None
17 Pretty	Many (10 or more people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Many (10 or more people)	Many (10 or more people)	Many (10 or more people)	Many (10 or more people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Quite
18 Queen	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None/not applicable	None
19 Rose	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Many (10 or more people)	Many
20 Suzie	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	None/not applicable	None
21 Tammy	Quite a few (7-9 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Very few (1-3 people)	Some (4-6 people)	None/not applicable	Very f

## Appendix 7: An automated graphic from Google Forms (survey)

If, you feel like YES provided you with soft skills training: which one?

20 responses

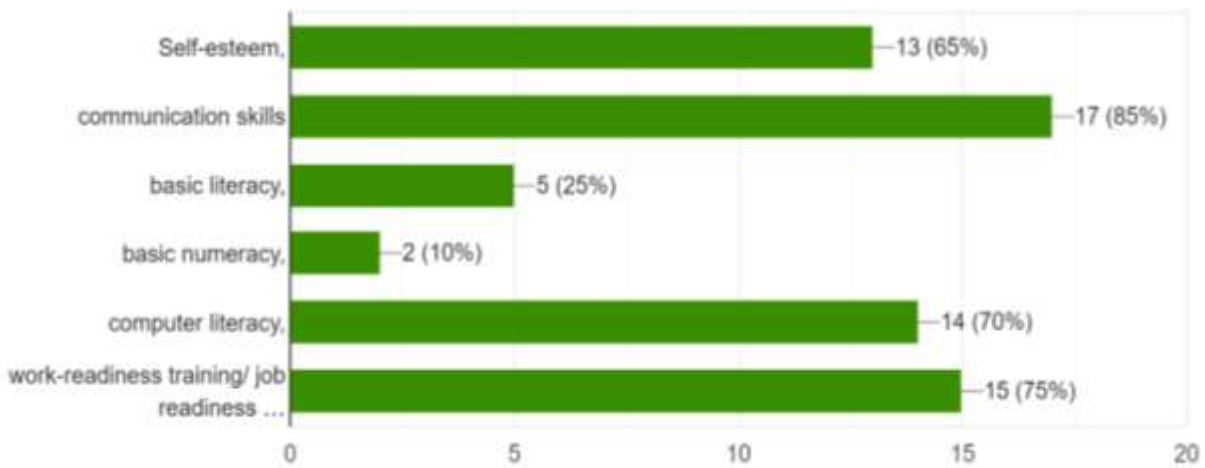


Figure 15: Soft skills received by youth.

## Appendix 8: Focus group guide

The following is the structure of the focus group followed by the questions I am interested in and will discuss with the you.

### Introductions and icebreaker

- Get to know each other's name
- Icebreaker
- Ground rules for group discussion  
(stating your name for the record, no wrong answers, confidentiality within the group etc)

### Probes phrases

- What do you actually mean when you...
- If I am hearing you correctly, ....
- If you had a different experience, what was it?

### General experience of the Programme

1. What was it like being part of YES?
2. What was your experience of the recruitment?
3. What is the next step after recruitment or applying?
4. What was your experience of the placement process?
5. What was your experience of the mentorship?
6. What was your experience in the workplace?
7. What parts of the YES intervention do you feel were the most beneficial to you? Why?
8. What parts do you feel were not so successful? Why?

### Comprehensiveness

9. What were your needs before YES?
10. How were your needs met by YES? Why/why not?
11. What were your aspirations before YES?
12. How were your aspirations met by YES? Why/why not?
13. How were you connected to: people, education opportunities, work opportunities, other organisations etc.?

### Skills

14. What skills were you provided by YES?
15. How were the skills provided by YES?
16. How did YES determine the skills training you needed?
17. In your mind, is there anything YES could be doing differently? Why/why not?

## Appendix 9: Extract from a transcript

R: And then after that, what happened?

ROSE: We started the training. 'Cause le Ieye Houghton kaSunday for induction eo. ['Cause we ent to Houghton on Sunday for the that induction]

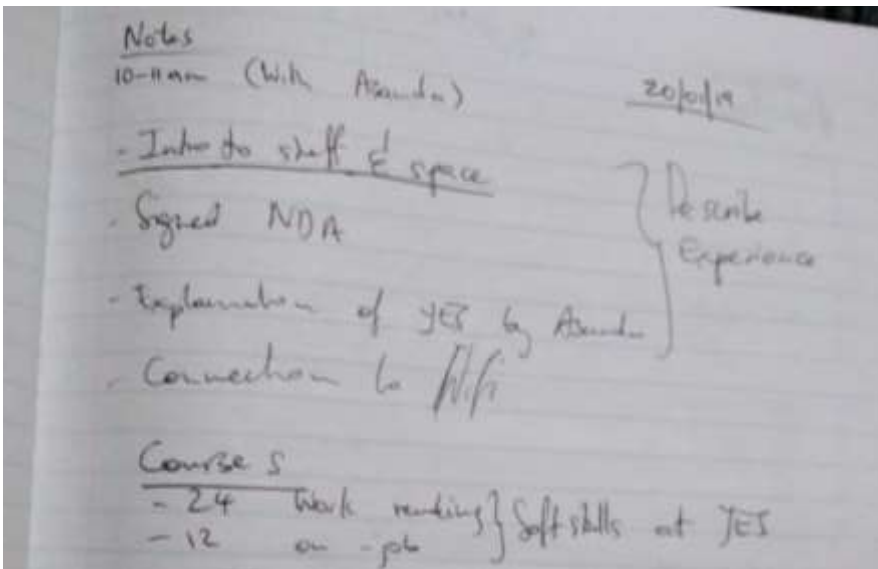
SUZIE: We started on a Tuesday.

ROSE: Oh, yeah, yeah. We went on a Tuesday. And then basitshela ke ukuthi sizoqala ke itraining. Basitshela ngemishini. Basinikeza namaphepha akhona ukuthi lona umshini wani nani. [they told us that we will start with the training. They told us about the machines. They gave us the manuals for the machines] They took us to the factory. Bengekabi [I was not] ready though yona [the factory]. Basibonisa le mishini le yo ukuthi lo umshini ngulowa kwi-training. [They show us the machine and how they work in the training] And then the following day saqala itraining [we started with the training]. Okay. Basibizela abantu [They invite people for us]... Apparently bona bebawazi umshini. Bafika bazositrainer [they knew the machines. They came and trained us on] day 1 and day 2. Okay. And then Day 4 kwaba ne [there was an] event ye [for the] opening. Okay. Saqala kanjalo [That's how we started].

R: Okay. Those who had a different experience. What was it?

SUZIE: Azange siye eHoughton but sahlanga la. Okay sizise ama document. [We did not go to Houghton with them but we met them there. Okay. We brought out documents] Okay. photo, Id number.

## Appendix 10: Notes from the field



## Appendix 11: Initial Thematic Framework

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	[Insert Data]
Youth	Needs	
Programme	Experience	
	Comprehensive	
	Skills	
Other	Skills, gap, issues etc.	

## Appendix 12: Example coded text from transcripts

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface. On the left, there is a 'Nodes' list with a search bar and a table of nodes. The main window displays a transcript excerpt with several lines highlighted in blue, indicating they have been coded. The highlighted text includes:

- Reference 1 - 1.00% Coverage
- Daisy: Oh, yeah. I think we all followed the same procedure. We were recruited by Unlock'd ... We registered with... Okay. My process, I registered at YES. Then, I got emails from Unlock'd. Oh, before Unlock'd it was Giraffe [Agency]. Okay. Then from Giraffe, it [Unlock'd] was always linking me to YES. Then I thought to myself, if it is always linking it me to the same thing, then I am not being scammed. (Laugh). Yeah. Then it was Unlock'd who called.
- Reference 1 - 0.33% Coverage
- ROSE: Like ne ba [they] checker attendance ya [of the] programme before inviting [you] for interview. No attend-a [and if you attended] regularly.

The 'Nodes' list on the left includes the following items:

Name	Files	References
1 Comprehensiveness of the YES	0	0
2 Skills provided by YES	5	14
3 Stages of the programme	0	0
3.1 YES advertising to youth to join YES	5	10
3.2 YES signing up procedure for youth	5	16
3.3 YES Stage after sign up before placing y	8	20
3.4 YES Recruiting youth for placement	2	2
3.4.1 General recruitment experience	4	11
3.4.2 Recruitment agencies	5	14
3.4.3 Interviewing for placement	8	18
3.4.4 How recruitment is done	9	25
3.4.5 Where recruitment is done	5	22
3.4.6 Required documents in recruitment	4	18
3.5 YES placing youth	1	3
3.5.1 Process of placing	7	27
3.5.2 Factoring youth's needs in placeme	4	7
Length it takes to be placed	5	18
3.6 Work Placement youth's experience	1	3
3.7 YES check in an on placed youth	1	1

## Appendix 13: Coded transcripts' extract

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Word document with a transcript excerpt. The transcript text is as follows:

231 Bonnie: If y only you two

232 R: So, you guys?

233 Bonnie: They signed late.

234 Daisy: Yes, me and Emily, we signed contract on a different day. So, we might have signed later than you guys.

235

236 Amy: (Joking) Latecomers.

237 Daisy: I cannot remember. They only took our matrics [matric certificates] only. Then they said, we will come back for...

238

239 Bonnie: (interrupting) Again, the way Clara athena ngakhosa, muna [they way that Clara explains it, ma] I was interviewed the same day and got the call the same day. I never waited for any call. I remember, I was at a mall submitting my CV to a store and the manager, I still remember the manager, she said are you now not submitting the CV. I said, yes. I have a better offer. Same day and same time.

240

241

242

243

244 Clara: On the phone they said, I must see them.

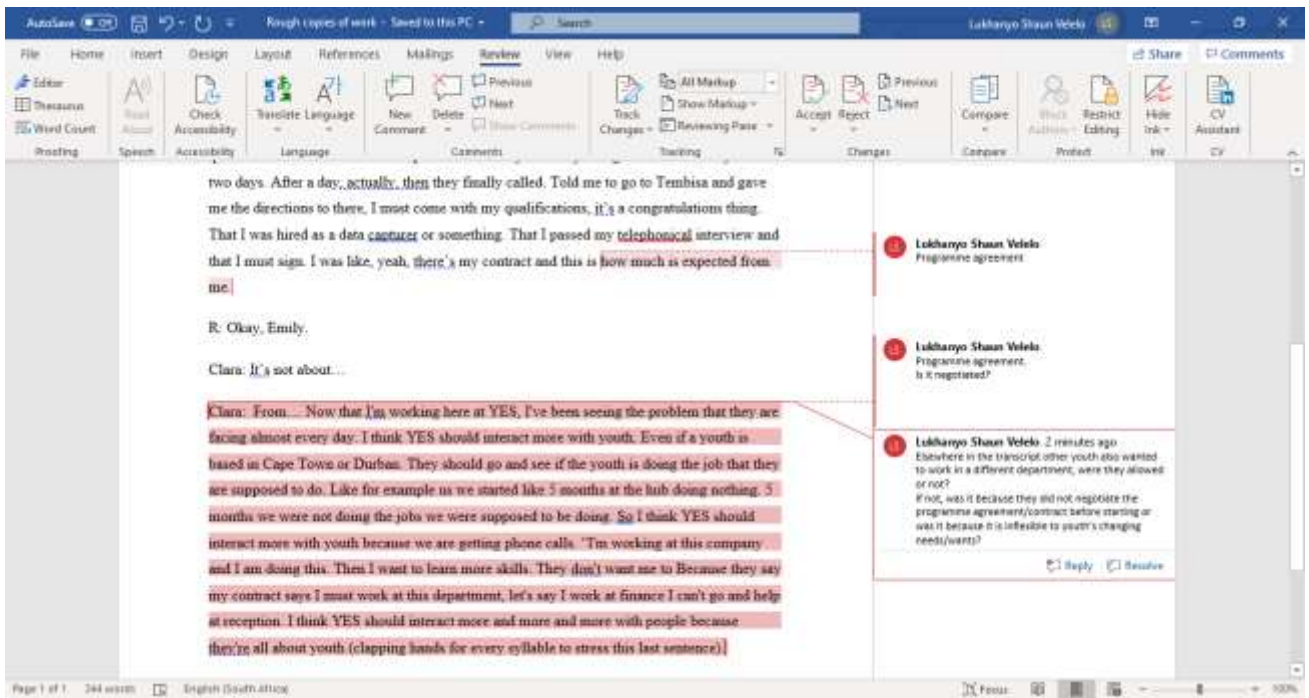
245 Amy: I would like to inform you that you got the job, same time.

246 Bonnie: Exactly.

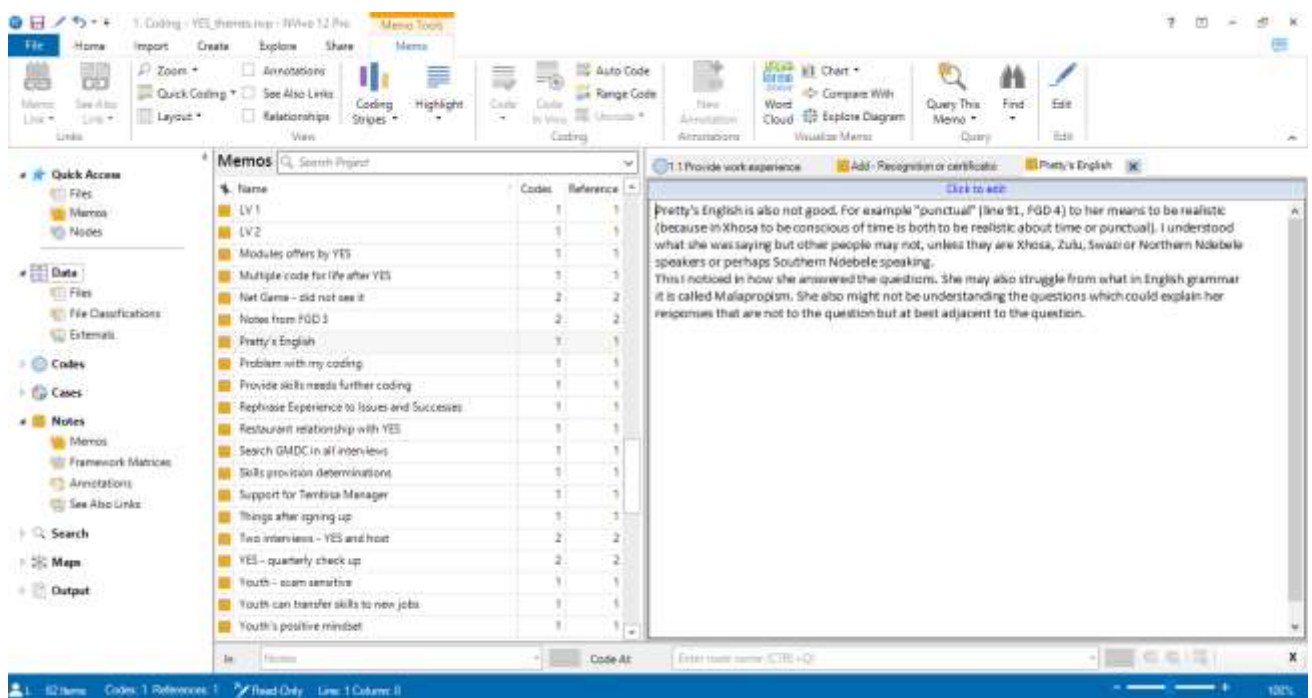
247 Clara: I must come to Tembisa and sign the contract.

A red callout box on the right side of the page contains the following text:

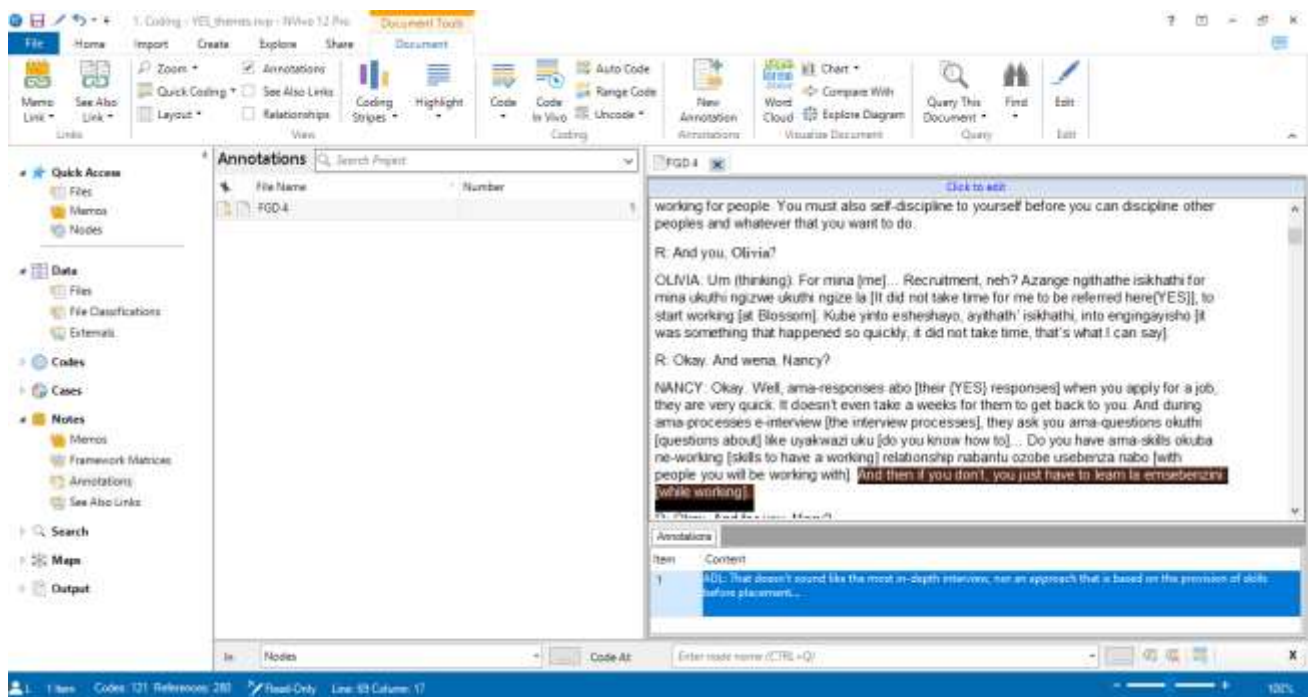
**Lukhanyo Shuan Velelo**  
So, they register, bring their matric certificate (and once higher qualifications). They may or may not get a placement with some questions or they are immediately offered (any kind of a job available).



## Appendix 14: Example of memo



## Appendix 15: Example of annotation



## Appendix 16: Different Coding level

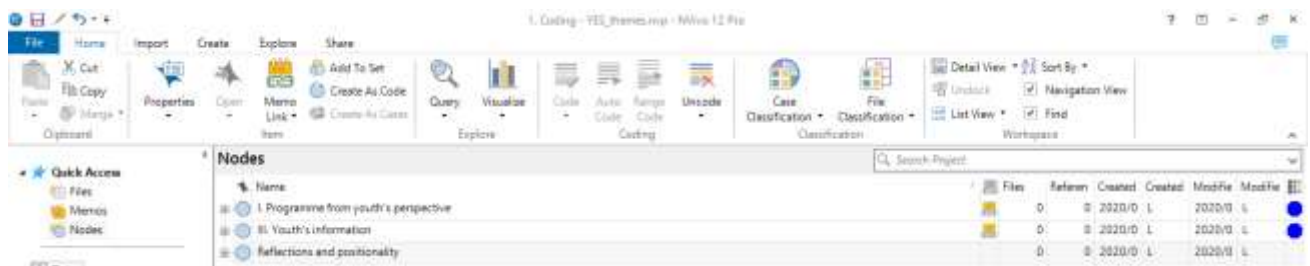


Figure 16: First level coding.

Name	Files	Referen	Created	Created	Modified	Modified
1 Programme from youth's perspective	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1.1 Comprehensiveness of the YES	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
2 Skills provided by YES	6	14	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
3 Stages of the programme	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
4. YES-Addressing youth's needs	1	1	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
5 Youth's evaluation of the YES	1	1	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
8. Youth's information	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1 Youth Before YES	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
2 Skills youth had before YES	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
3 Youth's Experiences outside of YES	1	2	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
4 Expectations for after YES	2	2	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
6 Challenges and issues facing youth	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
7 Gaps in youth	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
8 Lessons for youth	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
3 Commendations of youth	1	1	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
Youth in workplace	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
Black Tax Experience	2	2	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
Corruption, scam, nepotism sensitive	1	2	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
Reflections and positionality	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L

Figure 17: Second level coding.

Name	Files	Referen	Created	Created	Modified	Modified
1 Programme from youth's perspective	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1.1 Comprehensiveness of the YES	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1.1.1 Provide work experience	4	10	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1.1.2 Provide social capital	3	5	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1.1.3 Link to depts or sectors	2	2	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1.1.4 Connect to education system	2	2	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
1.1.5 Support for care responsibilities	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
Connect to labour market	3	8	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
Financial provision	3	3	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
Provide skills	1	1	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
2 Skills provided by YES	6	14	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
3 Stages of the programme	0	0	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
4. YES-Addressing youth's needs	1	1	2020/0	L	2020/0	L
5 Youth's evaluation of the YES	1	1	2020/0	L	2020/0	L

Figure 18: Third level coding.

## Appendix 17: Overview results of the participants

Table 19: Overview of the participants' background.

Alias	Host company	Born (age)	Highest Education	Residential Area	Type of House	Live with	Dependants	Mother	House income sources	Household income pm
Amy	YES Headquarters	1994 (26)	Grade 12 completed	Township	Medium dwelling (2-bedroom house)	3 or 4	3 or 4	Yes	Informal work, Child Grant, Gov pension	R2,500 - R4,999
Bonnie	YES Headquarters	1992 (28)	Post-Grade 12 qualification	Township	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	1 (only me)	3 or 4	Yes	Informal work, Child Grant, Gov pension	R5,000 - R9,999
Clara	YES Headquarters	1997 (23)	Post-Grade 12 qualification	Township	Formal renter (flat/ apartment/ shared building)	1 (only me)	2	No	Formal job, Child Grant, Gov pension	R5,000 - R9,999
Daisy	YES Headquarters	1992 (28)	Post-Grade 12 qualification	Township	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	3 or 4	2	Yes	Formal job, Child Grant, Gov pension	R5,000 - R9,999
Emily	YES Headquarters	1995 (25)	Honours/BTech or higher degree	Township	Small dwelling (RDP/ 1-bedroom roomed house)	3 or 4	3 or 4	No	Formal job, Child Grant	R10,000 or more
Flora	YES Headquarters	1989 (31)	Honours/BTech or higher degree	Suburban area	Large dwelling (big/ multiple roomed house)	More than 5	2	Yes	Informal work [Note: might be high]	Don't know
Gloria	YES Headquarters	1994 (26)	Honours/BTech or higher degree	Township	Large dwelling (big/ multiple roomed house)	3 or 4	More than 5	Yes	Formal job, Cash transfer, Child Grant	R2,500 - R4,999
Hannah	Telecoms company	1995 (25)	Post-Grade 12 qualification	Suburban area	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	1 (only me)	1 (Only me)	No	Informal work	R5,000 - R9,999
Ivy	Telecoms company	1990 (30)	Post-Grade 12 qualification	Township	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	3 or 4	2	Yes	Informal work	R2,500 - R4,999

Jane	Telecoms company	1994 (26)	Post-Grade 12 qualification	Don't know	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	2		Don't know	No	Formal job	R2,500 - R4,999
Kim	Telecoms company	1996 (24)	Post-Grade 12 qualification	Township	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	2		More than 5	Yes	Informal work, Cash transfer, Child Grant Sell cow/crop	R2,500 - R4,999
Lilly	Telecoms company	1992 (28)	Honours/BTech or higher degree	Township	Formal renter (flat/ apartment/ shared building)	2		1 (Only me)	No	Formal job	R10,000 or more
Mary	Light manufacturer	1999 (21)	Grade 12 completed	Township	Small dwelling (RDP/ 1-bedroom roomed house)	More than 5	5		No	Formal job, Child Grant	R2,500 - R4,999
Nancy	Light manufacturer	1995 (25)	Grade 12 completed	Township	Large dwelling (big/ multiple roomed house)	3 or 4		2	No	Informal work, Child Grant	R2,500 - R4,999
Olivia	Light manufacturer	1993 (27)	Grade 12 completed	Township	Medium dwelling (2-bedroom house)	5		More than 5	Yes	Refuse to answer	R5,000 - R9,999
Pretty	Light manufacturer	1984 (36)	Grade 10/11 completed	Township	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	5		3 or 4	Yes	Child Grant Gov pension	R2,500 - R4,999
Queen	Light manufacturer	1995 (25)	Grade 12 completed	Township	Large dwelling (big/ multiple roomed house)	2		1 (Only me)	No	Informal work, Child Grant	R2,500 - R4,999
Rose	Light manufacturer	1991 (29)	Grade 10/11 completed	Urban	Small dwelling (RDP/ 1-bedroom roomed house)	3 or 4		2	Yes	Formal job, Child Grant	R2,500 - R4,999
Suzie	Light manufacturer	1992 (28)	Grade 12 completed	Township	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	More than 5		3 or 4	No	Formal job, Child Grant	R2,500 - R4,999
Tammy	Light manufacturer	1993 (27)	Grade 12 completed	Township	Informal renter (room in house/ backyard/ garage)	2		3 or 4	No	Formal job	R5,000 - R9,999