

SA CASE STUDIES

Langa, Malose ;

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Potential for fostering social cohesion and violence prevention in East and southern Africa*

Youth inclusion through public employment programmes: A case study of the Community Work Programme in the township communities of Alexandra and Kagiso.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1. Youth unemployment in South Africa	3
1.2. Youth unemployment and mental health challenges	5
1.3. CWP as a response to the need for employment and development.....	5
1.4. Rationale of the current study.....	11
2. Methodological approach in data collection.....	11
2.1. Research setting:.....	11
2.2.1 Alexandra Township: An Overview	12
2.2.2. Kagiso township: An overview.....	13
3. Interviews:.....	14
4. Data analysis.....	18
5. Findings & Discussions.	19
5.1. Youth inclusion in the CWP in Alexandra and Kagiso.....	19
5.2. Gender differences amongst the youth participants	26
5.3. Youth, Money and the CWP	27
5.4. Loss of employment and COVID-19	29
5.5. The Special R350 Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant for the unemployed	32
5.6. CWP, youth inclusion and violence	34
5.7. Mental well-being of the youth and violence.....	35
6. Recommendations and policy implications----we also need to think of the preliminary findings could be used for media article.....	37

1. Introduction

1.1. Youth unemployment in South Africa

One of the most pressing socio-economic problems of the South African economy has consistently been high youth unemployment. There are number of reasons that contribute to high youth unemployment including lack of advanced or specialized education, lack sufficient networks in which to obtain information on job opportunities, connections to someone who is already working, as well as financial resources and mobility to seek work or relocate closer to the places where job opportunities exist (De Lannoy, Graham, Patel, & Leibbrandt, 2018). Similarly, such youth also have a deficit of ‘soft’ skills including communication and writing skills due to poor education system (De Lannoy, Graham, Patel, & Leibbrandt, 2018). Unemployment in South Africa has been structural or systemic in nature. Structural unemployment implies the overall inability of an economy to provide employment for the total unemployed people, including the youth (Cloete, 2016). Accordingly, due to its inherent nature, structural unemployment is the hardest to address. The link between unemployment and poverty in South Africa has been described as ‘bi-directional causality’ since unemployment causes poverty and poverty contributes to unemployment and its persistence (Cloete, 2016).

In the first quarter of 2015, the Statistics South Africa 2015 unemployment statistics (Stats SA) estimated that the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 – 34 was just under 37%, compared to 17% among adults aged 35 – 64 and a national average unemployment rate of about 26%. The statistics showed a continued rise in the levels of youth unemployment with the growing unemployment rate rising to 52% for youth aged 15 to 34 years. At the end of 2019, SA’s official unemployment rate was 29.1%, rising to 36.8% on the expanded definition (which includes those who would work if offered a job but have given up looking for employment). The percentage of youth between the ages of 15 and 34 not in education,

employment, or training (NEET) climbed to 40.1% (IRR, 2020). There is broad consensus that youth unemployment in South Africa is critical, with latest 2020 figures also confirming that over one half of young people aged 15–34 years are unemployed by the broad definition. Young people constitute 35 per cent of the national population (Stats SA, 2019) and remain central to concerns over the political and economic marginalisation. The key findings of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) conducted from January to March 2020 indicate that the total number of unemployed persons increased by 14.0% and that decreases in employment have been observed in the first quarter of 2020. Interestingly, of the 7.1 million unemployed persons (in the first quarter of 2020), 54.8% have education levels below matric, followed by those with matric at 35.4%. Only 2.3% of the unemployed persons are graduates while 6.8% have other tertiary qualifications as their highest level of education. Compared to Q1: 2019, the percentage of young persons aged 15–34 years who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) increased by 1.1 percentage points from 40.7% to 41.7% in Q1: 2020 (Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 1: 2020).

At the end of 2019, the number of unemployed South Africans was 16,420,000. Even when the global economy is growing, it has been an uphill battle to source employment domestically (IRR, 2020). According to the Quarterly Employment Statistics Survey released by Stats SA, the formal non-agricultural sector shed 648,000 jobs in the second quarter of 2020. According to this report, formal sector jobs also decreased by 671,000 in the second quarter of 2020. Job losses were reported by all industries in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the first quarter. Losses were mainly due to decreases in employment in the trade industry of 192,000 followed by the business services industry with 147,000 employees and community services with 103,000 employees. Further employment losses were reported in the manufacturing, construction and transport industries with 85,000, 74,000 and 38,000 job losses respectively. Moderate job losses were observed in the mining industry - 6,000 and the electricity industry - 3,000. Year-on year, job losses were seen in all industries, showing a decrease of 671,000 employees (-6.6%) in June 2020 compared with June 2019. Full-time jobs decreased by 541,000 quarter-on-quarter (-5.9%), whilst 568,000 full-time employment jobs (-6.2%) were lost compared to the same period last year. For those who held part-time jobs during the June 2020 quarter, 107,000 part-time jobs were lost (-10.4%) quarter-on-quarter, whilst 103,000 jobs (-10%) were lost year-on-year. Essentially, as a result of the government-imposed lockdown in response to the corona virus pandemic over 600,000 job losses have occurred within the formal sector (Quarterly Employment Statistics (QES) Report, 2nd Quarter 2020).

1.2. Youth unemployment and mental health challenges

South Africa entered the Covid-19 pandemic with 29% unemployment, over 40% living in poverty and the highest prevalent rate of inequality in the world. The negative economic impact resulting from Covid-19 has worsened the unemployment level. Unemployment is a major life event which can have a far-reaching, long-lasting, and devastating impact on people's lives, affecting not just the unemployed person but also family members and the wider community. From a psychological perspective, unemployed individuals are likely to experience substantial stress and other related mental health difficulties. Experiences of low self-esteem and loss of self-identity can impact on physical and mental health which can extend to broader consequences of social isolation and the loss of social networks and support (Philips, 2012). Other social ills linked to unemployment include crime and violence (Cramer, 2011; Simpson, 2018). Unemployment leads to pervasive and persistent patterns of hopelessness and despair which can engender a culture of violence, both individual and collective, within communities. It has been suggested that the impact of unemployment on mental health is dependent on the social support systems available at the time with some speculating that people may adapt better to unemployment because of their support networks and because the cost of living is lower in higher unemployment areas (Cramer, 2011; Simpson, 2018). In areas of high unemployment, the stigma often associated with unemployment may be less evident since unemployment is more widespread and its psychological impact is lessened (source). The personal and social costs of unemployment include severe financial hardship and poverty, sustained debt, homelessness, and housing stress, aggravated familial tensions and breakdown, boredom, alienation and estrangement, shameful stigma, increased social isolation, gradual inurement to a criminal lifestyle, erosion of confidence and self-esteem (Philips, 2012)

When youth feel worthy, secure, and connected within their family and community environments they are better able to cope with life stressors. Interventions at this level may also provide leadership and general opportunities and encourage youth to engage in community building and community service projects (Zaff & Michelsen, 2002) as meaningful and active participation promotes well-being (Oliver et al., 2006).

1.3. CWP as a response to the need for employment and development

Evidence based, community-level interventions are required to ensure that employment through productive vocations can be achieved, especially for the youth. According to Philips (2012) a focus on regular work would counter this by providing a level of predictability, structure, and social inclusion. Given this, there was a growing need for a policy response to

address the problem of unemployment in the South African economy. The government was left with no choice but to initiate a multi-pronged strategy, which included a largescale public employment programme (PEP) called the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) in 2004 to provide short-term temporary “work opportunities” for the unemployed poor; the EPWP emerged at the Growth and Development Summit of 2003 hosted by President Thabo Mbeki. EPWPs would provide “income relief through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out socially useful activities” while ensuring that participants benefited from “training and work experience, which should enhance their ability to earn a living in the future.” One of the biggest challenges in the EPWP has been to achieve meaningful levels of scale. A review of phase one highlighted that many participants were exiting back into poverty after short-term episodes of work. In 2009 and against this backdrop government implemented a second PEP, the Community Works Project (CWP), which provides a minimum employment guarantee of 100 days and has a different implementation model to that of the EPWP by constituting a significant expansion of the scale of public employment. The undertaking of such a positive intervention serves as a contributory measure towards poverty alleviation by promoting and fulfilling access to a source of income (a stipend) for unemployed people, who would otherwise have little or no access to social security or protection. The CWP is presently managed by the Department of Co-operative Governance (DCoG) and is implemented by non-profit agencies. Local government and additional local stakeholders participate in advisory reference groups at site level.

The primary aim of the CWP is to provide an employment safety net to unemployed or under-employed people of working age (over 18) who are enrolled into the programme in the form of two days of regular and predictable work per week (amounting to 100 days of annual employment). This opportunity will also bolster or enhance their chances of securing further employment for the remaining 3 days. Another positive dimension of the CWP is that it enables participants to contribute to the development of public assets and services in poor communities thus improving the quality of life of people in marginalised economic areas by offering work experiences, enhancing dignity and promoting social and economic inclusion. De Lannoy, Graham, Patel and Leibbrandt (2018) posit that the increases in youth unemployment are driven largely by increased discouragement amongst young people, particularly amongst the younger cohorts (15–19 and 20–24 year-olds), but also by the relatively poor decrease in absorption of young work seekers with intermittent decreases in unemployment owing to corresponding increases in the absorption of young work seekers. The authors also ascribe the poor resolution

of the South African youth employment challenge to the disconnect and lack of cohesive integration between the available evidence on the drivers of youth unemployment and the policy and programmatic interventions that have hitherto been implemented and conducted in distinct silos of the various academic disciplines and/or inaccessible to policy makers; this fragmented approach has promoted a lack of coordination and has acted as a stumbling block in addressing the challenge rather than scaling-up employment interventions. According to the National Development Plan (2011) the failure of these existing strategies has been that they have “never [been] fully institutionalised as holistic and comprehensive programmes to deal with all factors that produce crime and violence” (Langa et al., 2015).

Examples of tasks that participants perform and which are intended to enrich the community range from cleaning the environment (sweeping the streets, trimming overgrown grass and clearing away debris and rubble, planting trees and maintaining parks) to social projects such as working in schools as teacher assistants and/or career guidance teachers. Additional tasks, comprising this multi-sectoral portfolio of work, typically includes caring for the sick (for example, those suffering with HIV and/or TB) and the elderly or similarly assisting child-headed households, growing vegetables and supplying them to early development centers, school feeding schemes (distributing food parcels to indigent families) as a form of subsistence, youth recreation such as offering physical training (soccer, aerobics), community safety, support to schools, minor infrastructure works, environmental rehabilitation (for example, river cleaning). CWP was designed as an area-based government-initiative programme (under the aegis of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs) to facilitate and enable public employment in reaching a greater scale, and to address areas of greatest need. It was designed to be community-driven and to be quick, easy and cost-effective to implement. The basic premise of the CWP is that there is no shortage of work to be done in poor and marginalised communities and that high levels of unemployment contribute to and compound existing levels of dysfunction within these communities. The rationale behind the CWP is to actively encourage people to work, to facilitate and drive working communities which will inevitably create a positive cycle instead in communities where market-based employment does not exist nor likely to materialise organically. Demand for work exceeds the targets, with waiting lists presently at most CWP sites and there is no shortage of useful work at the local level. Community mapping-exercises and consultation have been used to inform the work agenda, with a common set of themes emerging across most sites such as food security and care-based work. Much of the work prioritised in the CWP addresses

immediate social crises, involving vulnerable children, sick and elderly people, destitution, inadequate nutrition and the need for food security, safety, and care of many kinds (Philip, 2012). The work performed within the CWP programme must have a labour-intensity of 65% in order to make the programme highly cost-effective which impacts on the kinds of work that can be undertaken. Additionally, CWP work is not prescribed but is instead agreed at local level. It has to be ‘useful work’, which serves the public good and/or improves the quality of community life, and is decided upon through local participatory processes. Implemented locally at a ‘site’, the CWP is designed to employ a minimum of 1000 people per site for two days per week, or eight days a month, up to a maximum of 100 days in a year. By the end of 2014/15, CWP had 185 sites in 159 municipalities. By the end of March 2016, the CWP was operating in 228 sites, with approximately 210,000 participants recruited (Philip, 2012).

De Lannoy et al. (2018) explored the impact of the CWP as a macro-level, demand-side intervention in attempting to address the low job growth and the lack of demand for young employees by specifically aiming to create demand for employees by countering the key macro issue of skills mismatch. The CWP, like the EPWP, is also a public employment programme but differs in that it is community based and relies on community members to identify specific development projects, and to provide regular short-term work. It also differs in its focus on social outcomes – both the outcomes of the work process (such as school betterment, care and support provided) and the social and economic inclusion outcomes for those who work on the programme. The CWP is also tightly modelled on social protection mechanisms that are intended to provide an income floor and provide a guarantee of employment. Evaluated against the primary aim of playing a ‘safety net’ role, the CWP has been successful. The income effects of such regular employment have been estimated and models, based on the pilot phase of the programme, have shown that scaling up the programme can have significant effects on lifting the poorest people above the lower bound poverty line. The CWP does not have specific training targets but in instances where more specialist expertise is required (e.g. in the case of home- and community-based care workers who require medical training), the CWP does permit training. Evidence about these training interventions has relayed positive feedback, with many reports of candidates being able to use their acquired CWP training and expertise to develop and sustain a career path in the care sector. Whilst it has not been the primary purpose of the CWP to develop or carve out wider pathways into the formal job sector it has shown much promise in achieving this loftier aim especially in cases where the training has been targeted towards specialist skills development and the programme’s direct connection to young workers

has the potential to be gradually leveraged in order to link/’pipeline’ or transition this youth demographic into further permanent opportunities within the formal job sector thereby outgrowing the short-term and low-skilled nature of the job descriptions (De Lannoy et al., 2018).

The CWP illustrates the myriad ways in which public employment can impact on and harness inclusive growth, in terms of both social and economic impacts, in relation to inclusion effects, as well as in relation to a range of social and economic multipliers. Research conducted has indicated that the CWP potentially had a significant positive impact on promoting social cohesion and cultivating relationships among a range of stakeholders in the community, including the successful assimilation of foreign nationals which contributes in preventing or mitigating incidents of violence and recidivism (Langa et al., 2015; Bruce, 2015). Crime and violence prevention initiatives are some of the community projects that CWP participants have explicitly oriented towards with some ex-offenders playing an active role in implementing such initiatives through their direct involvement in public awareness campaigns which relay their experiences to vulnerable youths-at-risk (who are oftentimes themselves recruited into CWP initiatives) and explore themes and challenge notions or pervasive attitudes surrounding masculinity and coercive gender roles. There is still a perception that the low levels of male participation in the CWP must be addressed in order to promote community development in a more holistic way. Whether deliberate or otherwise the structural marginalisation of men within the CWP typically translates into anti-social behaviour which potentially endangers women and compromises communities. As a result, the community development objectives of the CWP should prioritise balanced representation of gender and age within the programme. (Langa et al., 2015; Bruce, 2015). Philip (2012) examined the effects if unemployed people in South Africa were given the right to a minimum level of regular work on decent terms. She concluded that the limited nature of structural inequality within South Africa, which affords minimal social protection to marginalised sectors, in addition to the uneven distribution of unemployment wherein the burden of unemployment is borne disproportionately by impoverished communities and the limits of market-driven approaches to employment creation within marginal areas, doubtlessly trammels the capacity for human development leading to a multitude of adverse social implications. This underpins and bolsters the rationale behind the introduction of the CWP, a rights-based employment-guarantee scheme, which aims to create access to employment and provide both income and dignity to productive individuals who can

benefit from and contribute to their economy thereby enhancing their agency and building an active citizenry. It is also suggested that, if taken to scale, “an employment guarantee could also be an instrument for the structural change needed in marginal areas” and that such guaranteed incomes could break this cycle, making a direct investment in human development, community goods and services and natural capital and thus enhancing the potential for sustained social and economic development. Whilst the current form of the CWP is not an employment guarantee given that there is no legal entitlement to work on the scheme, and the number of people able to participate is circumscribed by the budget available at each site. However, it is a new modality for the delivery of public employment, designed with the explicit intention of developing and testing an approach that could be used to implement an employment guarantee in South Africa (Philip, 2012).

The CWP has offered marginalized community members a platform to work and to influence the direction and content of the programme. The scope of the work undertaken in the CWP is identified, prioritised, and agreed upon by community members in collaboration with local councillors and various other key stakeholders in the community (Langa et al., 2015). Their involvement can inadvertently expand and deepen the range of social ties between people within the community; through the CWP partnering with a host of stakeholders such as government departments, NGOs, and CBOs in order to advance social causes and specifically targeting demographic profiles it is responsible for the formation of webs of meaningful social networks and social bonds between groups of individuals and between relevant institutions. Through community campaigns and awareness programmes the CWP mobilises community members to either attend awareness programmes or distribute pamphlets and posters thereby promoting campaigns against drug and alcohol abuse. The CWP also supports community initiatives specifically aimed at crime prevention and public safety and makes a qualitative difference to an individual’s social capital within their community.

The CWP model could achieve much in the way of building local institutions, strengthening participatory development planning, deepening local democracy, and unlocking the potential agency within communities. The CWP need not be regarded as a safety net where markets fail; it could also be an instrument of structural change in marginal locales which is responsible for investing in people as well as in community assets and services, and in the process, creating new opportunities for sustainable economic development (Philip, 2012). Andersson and Alexander (2016) explored various challenges concerning the implementation of programmes as a social policy intervention, arising in part from the difficulties of effectively scaling up successful pilots to create a nationwide programme and acknowledged the various

difficulties of engagement with the state by non-profit organisations and challenges in forging sustainable partnerships between communities and government around shared goals given the widening societal gulf. Langa (2015) has similarly drawn attention to potential power struggles and tensions that might emerge as a result of contestation amongst community leaders vying for power, allegations of corruption, nepotism and general dissatisfaction over the stipend; such tensions are considered the natural concomitant effects of development initiatives which manage to produce an influx of new, albeit finite, resources and opportunities and counterproductively destabilise existing social hierarchies through intensified competition over the control of such resources and projects. Social cohesion can be achieved, and impoverished communities transformed in the face of such challenges if the CWP optimally facilitates the formation of strong community by ensuring a collective approach to problem-solving, effectively mobilizing community members and fostering a sense of solidarity amongst participants and leaders alike.

1.4. Rationale of the current study

It is the interest of the current study to explore the participation of the youth within CWP with specific focus on factors that motivate or hinder them from joining CWP, and activities that young people engage in once they join CWP. Current findings show the low level of youth participation in CWP (Langa et al., 2015; Bruce, 2015). Interviewing young people in and outside CWP can provide some insight about their participation or non-participation in the programme. Findings of this study can therefore be used to inform policies and strategies to promote youth inclusion within CWP. This may help to deal with the problem of youth unemployment and its associated risks such as violence. The link between youth economic exclusion and violence has well established in various studies (Berkham, 2007; Simpson, 2019), but nothing much is known about youth economic inclusion and how this may impact in reducing youth violence. This is the gap that the current study wishes to close by exploring how the involvement of the youth in the CWP as an economic inclusion may contribute to violence prevention.

2. Methodological approach in data collection

2.1. Research setting:

Interviews of this study were conducted in two South African townships, namely Alexandra and Kagiso. These two townships were mainly chosen for three reasons. Firstly, there was

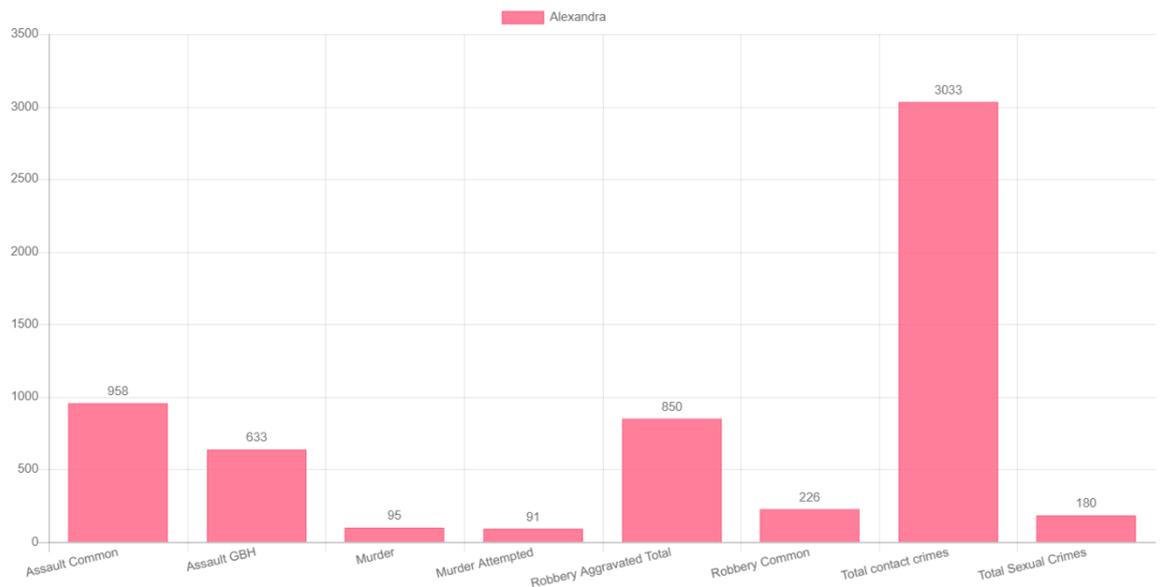
CWP implemented, which is the focus of our study about youth inclusion and secondly, we have strong existing networks in these townships which made easy for us to gain access to potential participants. Thirdly, there indications through our existing networks that they were youth initiatives within CWP that were worth researching and documenting for the purpose of this study.

2.2.1 Alexandra Township: An Overview

Established in 1912, Alexandra Township has a rich history in relation to South Africa's legacy of apartheid. The township was a prominent space for political organisation and resistance against the oppressive regime (Nauright, 2006). Despite its heritage, Alexandra has become quite transformed since its founding. Once a space of political strength, the significant increase in population size and diversity has over time given rise to political division (Lekaba, 2014; Nauright, 2006). According to StatsSA (2011), Alexandra comprises of 63 737 households, with 179 624 residents overall. It is often described as overpopulated as many people live in shacks with no access to decent basic services such as sanitation. Broken sewerages often overflow on the streets due to poor municipality services (African Centre for Migration & Society, 2017).

Alexandra is currently characterized by poverty, informal structures, and overcrowded conditions (Kotze & Mathola, 2012). Alex hosts a diverse foreign population mainly consisting mainly of Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, Malawians, Ethiopians, Pakistanis, and Somalis. The main languages spoken in the area are Zulu, Pedi, Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, Shangaan, Tsonga, Shona and English. Zulu is the language commonly used in the area (African Centre for Migration & Society, 2017). Due mainly to high unemployment rates in Alex, locals rely mainly on informal trading (spaza shops, street vending of fruits and vegetables, sweets and cigarettes, hair salons, shoe repairs, food outlets and taverns); casual labour, and social grants as their sources of income (African Centre for Migration & Society, 2017). Given some of these economic challenges, residents of Alex hold negative attitudes towards foreign nationals. Acts of xenophobic violence have reported in Alex dating back to 1994 and continues to date.

Alexandra has become known for high rates of violent crime. According to CrimeStatsSA, the incidence of criminal acts has nearly doubled since 2010 with recent crime statistics in 2020 revealing the following figures (ISS Crime Report, 2020)

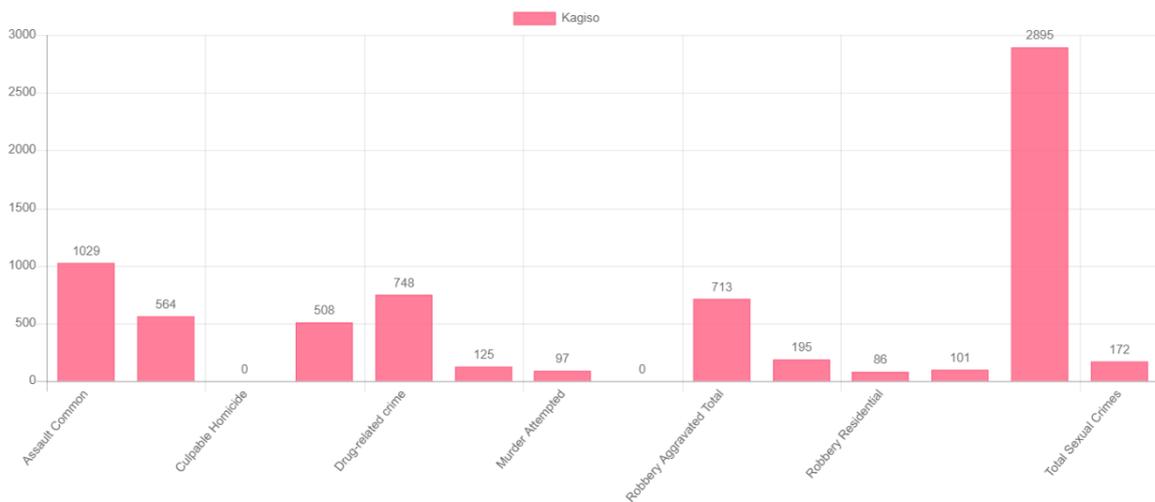


It is reported that it is young men who are mainly involved in criminal activities due to high rate of unemployment. This has in turn had implications on the proliferation of psychosocial issues affecting family structures, parenting and childhood experiences (Buschner, 2015; Kotze & Mathola, 2012; Langa, 2010; 2012; 2017). Psychosocial dilemmas include the use of substances, such as alcohol, tobacco, and dagga. Moreover, research by Langa (2006) indicate that the everyday use of these substances are high amongst the youth.

2.2.2. Kagiso township: An overview

Kagiso is a Tswana name which means ‘a place of peace’, situated about 5km South of Krugersdorp, along Main Reef Road. The township was proclaimed in 1920 when ex-miners and squatters that lived on smallholdings on the outskirts of Luipaardsvlei erected the first corrugated iron houses (www.mogalecity.gov.za, 2001). In 1958, Kagiso 2 was established (www.mogalecity.gov.za, 2001). Like all the townships in South Africa, Kagiso was established on the principle of apartheid social engineering (Khumalo, 2011). For example, inhabitants were grouped according to their ethnicity, with one section known as “Zulu Jump” and the other called “Batswaneng”. Kagiso is a homogenous with regards to race (mainly black people 99.5%, 0, 4 coloured and 0.2% whites) (Statistics South Africa, 2013). Half the residents in the area are predominantly Tswana speaking (51.4%). Other languages include Zulu (14.5%), Xhosa (13.6%), Sotho (7.2%) and others (13.3%) (Statistics South Africa, 2013).

The population size of people in Kagiso is 115 603. Kagiso like many black townships, it is also characterized by socio-economic problems, such as poverty and high unemployment (see www.mogalecity.gov.za, 2001, for more information on this point). It is reported 25.67% of the population in this area is unemployed. As a result, many people in this township live below poverty levels. Many of them rely on free municipality services for their survival. Due to some of these circumstances, the area is also characterized by increased levels of crime and substance abuse amongst the youth (Khumalo, 2011). Recent 2020 crime statistics for Kagiso are as follows in terms of ISS report:



Like Alexandra, it is also reported that many of these criminal activities in Kagiso are also committed by young unemployed men. Young men in both townships are implicated as perpetrators of violence. It is therefore important that interviews are conducted within these two communities to explore whether their involvement in violence is because of the economic exclusion and how their economic inclusion may directly or indirectly contribute to violence prevention.

3. Interviews:

Interviews were conducted with both CWP and non-CWP participants. The entry into CWP participants in both Alexandra and Kagiso was gained through the implementing agency and other relevant stakeholders. Arrangements with CWP representatives were made to explain the

research study. The permission was provided, including contact details of CWP leaders within various communities. The researcher met with these local CWP leaders for interviews and the process snowballed in meeting other CWP participants. Some of the interviews were conducted over the phone and via WhatsApp video calls during COVID-19.

For non-CWP participants, the researcher used the “street corner approach” which is defined as a research method in which the researcher approaches potential participants on the streets and randomly asking them for a brief interview (Simmons, 2007). This method is often used for research participants who are not easily accessible through formal processes and remain invisible on the margins of the society (Simmons, 2007). Applying this method, the researcher randomly stopped young people on the streets of Alex and Kagiso for brief conversations about the problem of youth unemployment and its relationship with violence and their reasons for not participating in the CWP. Other interactions involved the researcher going to places such as shopping complexes, car wash spots and sporting fields randomly stopping young people for quick interviews about issues of youth inclusion, violence, and job opportunities through programmes such as CWP.

Some interviews were tape recorded, while detailed field notes were written for interviews in which people were not comfortable to be tape recorded. Tables below provide details of the participants interviewed but it is important to note that all the participants were black in terms of race.

Biographical Tabulation of Research Participants.

Gender	Position	Age	Project name
M	CWP manager	34	Area Manager
F	Project Coordinator	29	CWP Teachers’ AID project
M	Project Coordinator	32	CWP Teachers’ AID project
F	Project Coordinator	25	CWP Teachers’ AID project
F	Project Coordinator	29	CWP Teachers’ AID project

F	Project Coordinator	27	CWP Teachers AID project
M	Project Coordinator	33	Sports for the Youth
M	Project Coordinator	29	Sports for the Youth
F	Project Coordinator	22	CWP Teachers' project
F	Project Coordinator	56	Sewing project
F	Project Coordinator	35	Safety project

Gender	Position	Age	Project name
F	CWP manager	33	Site Manager
F	CWP Manager	35	Area Manager
M	Project Coordinator	26	School Support project
M	Project Coordinator	23	Arts Project
F	CWP	33	CWP participant
F	CWP	32	CWP participant
M	CWP	27	CWP participant
F	CWP	30	CWP participant

NON-CWP participants

Gender	Age	Employment Status
Female	31	Unemployed
Female	24	Unemployed
Female	37	Temporary
Female	24	Employed

Female	24	Employed
Female	23	Unemployed
Female	27	Unemployed
Female	37	Unemployed - retrenched
Female	38	Unemployed
Female	27	Unemployed
Female	21	Unemployed
Male	22	Self-employed
Male	24	Self-employed
Male	22	Unemployed
Male	26	Unemployed
Male	24	Unemployed
Female	35	Self-employed
Female	49	Unemployed
Female	54	Unemployed
Male	35	Self-employed
Female	31	EPWP
Male	19	Unemployed
Male	29	Unemployed
Female	37	Unemployed
Male	25	Unemployed
Male	26	Unemployed
Female	22	Unemployed
Female	30	Unemployed
Male	21	Self-employed
Male	33	Self-employed
Male	31	Unemployed
Female	32	Unemployed
Male	25	Employed
Female	34	Employed
Male	33	Unemployed
Male	34	Unemployed

Male	27	Unemployed
Female	36	Unemployed

4. Data analysis

Comments relating to data collection and protocols during lockdown will be written as an appendix to this report and lessons learnt during this process. Despite all the challenges of COVID-19, the data was ultimately collected. The researcher then followed thematic content analysis in reading and rereading through the notes and listening to audio files to identify specific themes, which included the formation of CWP in each of the two communities, the inclusion of the youth in the CWP, gender dynamics of this inclusion, the value of money versus passion and interest, loss of employment and COVID-19, CWP and Violence as well mental health amongst the youth and its link to violence.

5. Ethical considerations

The study with CWP participants commenced after the permission was sought and approved by an implementing agency responsible for the management of the CWP in Gauteng. Contact details of relevant managers and coordinators were provided for the researcher to meet with and explain the nature of the study. The researcher met with CWP participants and then the process snowballed. All the participants were above the age of 18 years. Each participant was provided with information sheet and consent forms. Many agreed to be interviewed despite not having signed consent forms. The researcher sensed that many participants were not to sign the consent forms despite repeated explanation that there was nothing personally incriminating about the form or putting one's job at risk for participating in the study. It is also important to mention that due to COVID-19, some interviews were done via online platforms such as WhatsApp video call, Microsoft teams and Zoom. Consent to participate was given verbally. Participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were provided with data for online interviews. Overall, interviews went well despite connectivity challenges encountered during the field work. To maintain privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms are used in the report and any identifying information has been removed from the extracts.

6. Findings & Discussions.

6.1. Youth inclusion in the CWP in Alexandra and Kagiso

In Alexandra and Kagiso, CWP was initiated in 2009 and 2010, respectively. Since then, it has gone through various phases as the government changed its policies and new agencies were assigned to implement new strategies¹. CWP has gone through multiple changes since its first pilot phase in 2007. However, key principle in terms of its recruitment policy has remained the same that it is an employment safety net that is aimed at recruiting any unemployed person above the age of 18 years old. The interest of the current study was the inclusion of the youth in the CWP in the two communities (namely Kagiso and Alexandra) and how this in turn may contribute to youth inclusion and violence prevention.

All the participants asserted that there are young people² in the CWP. Gauteng province (in which two communities are located) has 21 546 CWP participants. Out of this number, 8200 (%) are youth, 1 759 (%) are young males and 6 441 (%) are young females. For Alex, 97 young males and 320 young females were involved in the CWP, while Kagiso has 129 males and 476 females (need to get updated reports to verify these figures). Conclusion drawn out of these figures is that young people are participating in the CWP but there are vast differences in terms of gender.

Young people interviewed in this study asserted that things have shifted over the last few years about the inclusion of the youth within CWP. Many asserted that they had negative attitudes prior joining CWP. It appears that since its inception CWP was negatively associated with older people. As a result, young people did not want to be associated with CWP as reflected in the quotes below:

Yeah, I did not join because I thought this project was for grannies and old people. This is until my friend (name withheld) called and said I must come and join. I went but I can say I see this is not a project for old people (Alex Youth CWP participant)

I used to think that it is the project for abokoko (grannies) (Kagiso Youth CWP participant)

¹ Visit CSVR website (www.csvr.org.za) for various reports on CWP and its inception and conceptualization.

² Young people referring to people between the age of 18 and 35 years old.

Other youth participants asserted that the negative views are also linked with the work that CWP participants perform in communities, especially the cleaning of the streets, which made many of them of not wanting to be part of it.

Many people only associate CWP with cleaning of the streets. They just think CWP is for people who clean streets (Alex Youth CWP Participant)

Some people say CWP stand for Children Without Parents...They see CWP participants as clowns and people to be laughed at. So many people do not want to join because it is not cool to be a CWP member (Kagiso Youth CWP participant).

For some call CWP Clena Wena Popaye (Clean you fool) (Kagiso Youth CWP participant)

Generally, the views about CWP amongst the youth are negative. The non-youth CWP participants expressed the same views as reasons why they did not want to join CWP. However, the young people who were now in the CWP asserted that they had the same views prior joining CWP, but they now have different views. They feel a lot has changed about CWP, especially in terms of activities that cater for the youth:

People have a wrong perception about CWP. When we announce ourselves, we are part of CWP Arts many people get shocked. We are part of CWP but under Arts Project. People often associated CWP with cleaning of the streets, but we have many things that are happening in the CWP which can attract young people. I will not lie that I also had a wrong view bout CWP before I joined (Alex youth CWP participant).

We need to change this mentality amongst the youth that CWP is a cleaning project. CWP can empower the youth. Skills development must be integrated in the CWP. This will help to create opportunities (Alex youth CWP participant)

Arts project has the choir, dancing group and gambots as well as theater performance. We often organize events where we showcase our talent as the youth of Alex. I just hope we can other platforms beyond Alex to show our art (Alex youth CWP participant).

In Alex, the inclusion of Arts activities such as dance, choir and acting within the CWP were cited as one of the key drivers of why many youth people joined the programme. The image of it being a project of older people is slowly changing as these young people organize public events to showcase their talents and skills. Some of the participants spoke about their ambitions develop their artistic skills beyond the CWP and join big dancing or acting groups. **Below are photos that some participants³ shared during field work:**

³ I will ask for the consent from these participants if we decide to include them in the final report.





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Interestingly, many of the participants who were part of the Arts project in Alex were young males (the point I return to later in the report when discussing gender differences amongst the participants). Other youth-orientated projects within the CWP included involvement and recruitment of young people to work as coaches of different sporting codes such as soccer, cricket, baseball, and basketball. All these sporting activities helped to change the image of the CWP in Alexandra.

In Kagiso, many CWP participants who were young and had matric qualifications as well as other post school qualifications were also recruited to work in primary schools as teachers' assistants:

As teachers' assistants we help young children with their homework after school before they go home. This assists them to complete their schoolwork as some their parents cannot read and write (Kagiso CWP teacher Assistant)

Teachers assistants are competent people. Some have matric but we were not able to go to varsity due to financial difficulties. Some have post high school qualifications. I have Diploma in HR but I was not able to get a job but then decided to join CWP. I work as a Teacher assistant (Kagiso CWP teacher Assistant)

Teachers assistants have a role to play. For example, we also assist slow learners. After school we try and assist them to fully understand the work that teachers taught them in class (Kagiso CWP teacher Assistant)

In Alex, other young people were also recruited to work in schools as teachers' assistants:

We have CWP participants who work as teacher assistance in schools. They assist learners with schoolwork as well as homework (Alex CWP Manager)

Career counselling services need to be provided to school-going youth so that they choose good careers while still at school. They may still reduce unemployment (Alex CWP Teacher Assistant)

The participants were proud as young people to work in the CWP and provide all these services, such as working as coaches, teachers' assistants as well as promoting arts in their communities. Their view was that these activities allowed them to change the negative image of the CWP as the cleaning project or project for the elderly. They expressed their views on what needs to be done so that many other young people join the CWP:

Public campaigns must be organized to challenge the negative stigma associated with CWP (Alex youth CWP)

Community meetings must be organized to give young people clear information about the CWP (Kagiso CWP Coordinator)

Publicity is needed about the CWP and the Art project or recruit many young people (Alex youth CWP Coordinator).

We must use social media to talk about CWP now, but currently there is no clear marketing or media strategy to encourage many young people to join (Alex youth CWP Coordinator).

The above views are pertinent especially when one considers narratives shared by the non-CWP youth who did not have any information about the CWP, except to say ‘it is project for the elderly or people with yellow overalls {referring to CWP uniform} who clean the streets. Upon sharing information about the CWP in the interviews, some non-CWP participants were keen to join and be members of the programme. It was evident that information sharing sessions are needed amongst the youth about CWP and how they can be included. However, the CWP youth suggested that exit strategies also need to be integrated within the current system to ensure that the youth become economically independent in the long-term than to rely on the CWP stipend permanently:

We need to help young people in the CWP to start income generating projects. We need to help them to register businesses and this may encourage others to want to join because they see the future (Alex youth CWP Coordinator)

It is important for various departments in government to work together to support CWP. Our work covers aspects of different departments but there is no communication between all these departments so that some of the youth can be absorbed and be hired by these departments (Kagiso CWP Manager).

CWP should serve as a stepping stone to more other opportunities. For example, Leratong Hospital has hired some of the CWP participants permanently. This will encourage to join because they see people are moving (Kagiso CWP teacher Assistant).

A need for a clear exit strategy was raised in the interviews that this may help to entice many young people to join the CWP if they see the opportunities it offers beyond the current activities. In response to COVID-19 and how this has affected the schooling, the National Government has recommended the recruitment of teachers’ assistants in schools for 2021 academic year. It is important to note that CWP already had this project (teachers’ assistants) prior COVID-19. During field work (prior COVID-19), one participant made the comment below:

We need formal recognition for teachers' assistants by the Department of Education (Kagiso CWP teacher Assistant)

Follow-up interviews may need to be done about the teachers' assistant programme that the National Government has announced in its response to COVID-19 and how this links or not with the existing CWP project. It is reported that the announced National Government project, each teacher assistant will be paid R4 000 monthly, which is higher as compared to the R780 payment that the CWP participants are currently receiving monthly for part time work.

6.2. Gender differences amongst the youth participants

Overall, many CWP youth participants are females than males. As reported in other CSVr studies (Bruce, Masuku, Langa), female participation was higher due to the nature of the CWP work did (which were described as too feminine by many men). Many CWP projects still appear to be female-orientated such as cleaning, gardening, and home-based care. The teachers' assistant project also appeared to attract many young females (maybe due to them meeting the selection criteria of having matric and other post school qualifications).

There are no young men who are working as teachers' assistants. I think it is one or two in the whole of Kagiso. We have close to 48 teachers' assistants, but many are women...we need to recruit male teachers' assistants (Kagiso youth CWP Coordinator).

However, it appears that the Arts project in Alex attracted many young males, especially the music, and dancing project. Many young males asserted that this project (Art) connected well with their talents and skills. They asserted that their involvement in the Art project helped them to move away from street corners where they could have potentially joined gangs and be involved in criminal activities.

I must say you see we work with so many young boys. Some since they joined us, they have stopped smoking or doing wrong things. We perform every day. You see CWP says people must work two days a week, but you find us the hall practicing every day. We passionate about this (Alex youth CWP Coordinator).

Findings of this study appear to be negating previous CSVr studies which concluded that young men are not keen to join CWP (Bruce, Masuku, Langa). It appears that young men are keen to join CWP, provided projects undertaken are in line with their interests. Malose⁴ who

⁴ All names in the report are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

was the CWP youth Coordinator for Sports, mentioned that his project as a Soccer Coach attracts many young boys in Alex. He trains school-going boys from Monday to Friday and organizes soccer games on weekends. He asserted that he sees his work as a violence prevention project because these young boys are taught discipline, and respect in addition to playing soccer. He also talks to them about the use of drugs and risks associated with this. Coaches of other sporting codes such as basketball and baseball are also young men. In their narratives, they also asserted that their involvement in the CWP as young males has brought them a new sense of self and encouragement to other boys as they see them as role models.

You know as a coach you must be role models to your boys. You see here in the townships; young boys always look at gangsters as role models. We are against that. We want young boys to have different models. People who do not do drugs or steal. We tell them to focus on school and be good boys. I tell them not to fight because you know boys like to fight. I teach them a lot of things about life that crime is not good (Alex youth CWP coordinator).

We have this project of sports against crime. We encourage boys and girls to join our sporting programmes so that we move away from street corners and starting smoking drugs. Our work is to help young people to stay away from problems (Kagiso youth CWP coordinator)

All these narratives affirm **Bruce, Masuku and Langa's work** about the potential of the CWP to prevent violence in communities. It is possibly through networks that young men create through their involvement in sports that positive masculinities are nurtured and supported. It is evident that soccer matches are used as spaces in which to provide mentorship about what it means to be a young person in South Africa, and to identify opportunities that young people can explore rather than resorting to crime and drugs. Gary Barker (2005) found that the use of soccer as a violence-prevention tool was effective in the Favelas in Brazil, especially where these soccer events were linked to acquisition of other life skills, mentorship programmes and career opportunities. This is what the CWP participants are doing: soccer matches are used as spaces for awareness raising and education about the impact of crime and violence prevention. Similar practices in soccer was used as a violence prevention tool in the CWP was identified in Ivory Park and Orange Farm **(Langa & Masuku,)**.

6.3. Youth, Money and the CWP

Meanings and the value of the CWP was contested amongst the non-CWP and the CWP participants, especially with regards to the monthly payment (R780) that the CWP participants received.

There is no youth that will stand for such a small amount of money because we want money as the youth (Alex non-CWP participant)

Yes I do know about the CWP but I am not interested in that I always see them cleaning the streets. I think those people are doing a good job, they work very hard even under hot weather conditions wearing their overalls and boots. But their salary is too small for the job they're doing because I once attempted to apply for it because they do not require your C.V or multiple documents, they just need your ID copy but because of the money they are receiving is too small I couldn't do it. I asked about the salary because everywhere money comes first you have to ask 'okay we're going to work, you are saying this is for the community but how much is the payment?' that is when they started saying 'the payment will be R1, 500' No it's too small (Alex non-CWP participant)

The amount of money paid was cited by many non-CWP interviewees as a reason why CWP was not seen as a viable and attractive source of employment for the youth. However, it was evident in the interviews that some of the non-CWP participants were not fully aware that CWP was an employment safety net in which the participants were only expected to work two days a week and use other days to search for permanent job opportunities. Once these explanations were provided, some non-CWP participants were interested in joining CWP. This finding links with the view discussed earlier about lack of information about CWP amongst the youth. Recommended public campaigns may assist to dispel all the misconceptions about CWP. The CWP participants acknowledged that although the payment was not good enough to meet all their financial needs, but many were committed to their CWP duties because the work was in line with their interests as the youth:

For me it is not about my money. Yes, it is like I do not want money, I do but for now I'm focusing doing what I like which is art and being a performer. At least I still get some money to do what I like until I get something big and better (Alex youth CWP participant).

It is about passion and doing some you love. You see they say two weeks, but we practice Monday to Monday. You come to the hall anytime or any day, you find us there. It is no longer about love of what we are doing as the youth (Alex youth CWP participant).

The amount of money paid to the CWP participants remains important, but it is also important that relevant projects that youth-orientated are developed and supported as this may also help to attract many young people, especially young males who are both victims and perpetrators of violence (Ratele, 2013). Stories of the young men and women in Alex and Kagiso who are involved in the Arts, Sport and teachers' assistant projects are good examples of how CWP may be developed in communities to attract the youth.

6.4. Loss of employment and COVID-19

Some of the interviews were done during the lockdown period in response to the spread of COVID-19. It became clear how the national lockdown implemented by the government became a major obstacle in the everyday lives of youth that exacerbated already existing socio-economic issues such as unemployment, low incomes, poor education outcomes, and community safety. When the question was posed on how Covid-19 pandemic has affected the youth of these townships, two major problems cited were job losses and rising unemployment levels.

According to me this Covid-19 has destroyed jobs, people have lost their loves ones and people are not working. As people sitting here in the streets we do not enjoy sitting and not doing anything, what we're looking at is there is no food in the house because no one is working, and we are now dependent on social grants that no longer assist our children (Alex youth, unemployed female)

... because you know, companies closed, and a lot of people were retrenched so chances of someone who is going to be new in the job market are strictly low ... especially someone who is unemployed like me versus someone whose been employed with experience. Because when companies want to come back in the system they just want to start rolling out and they will not be looking at teaching someone a job you know (Kagiso youth, unemployed male)

The wider implications of youth in these two townships feeling that there is nothing out there left for them in relation to finding employment speaks to a lack of job opportunities in general. COVID-19 as reported in various studies has exacerbated poor socio-economic conditions, especially the unemployability of the youth (sources). Those who had jobs pre-Covid-19 were subsequently retrenched, and some had salary cuts, which also impacted on their livelihoods.

It [Covid-19] hurt us, I even lost my job at Tekkie Town – we were retrenched and told they no longer require additional staff (Alex youth, employed female)

*“I think for me the lockdown issue affected us workers too much because we had salary cuts and our hours were also cut – we had to work 4 days in and 4 days out. Meaning how much are you going to earn? ... In terms of the taxi fare – they went up while our salaries were much lower due to cuts, you understand that it was too much. ... because some staff members were retrenched, others were told to move to other malls, for example if you worked at the Mall of Africa you were asked to now work in Tembisa. I mean it is too much! Leaving from Alexandra to go work in Tembisa ... we are poor we want employment we are desperate, so we had to take the opportunity to go work in Tembisa, meaning do you know how much it costs moving [**taxi fare hike**] from Alexandre to Tembisa? (Alex youth, employed female)*

Other young people spoke about the ‘fear’ of not being able to find future employment amid the current Covid-19 (second wave).

It interrupted us, I feel like I could not do the things we used to do such as going out to look for a job and it was difficult to find money as well, even the piece jobs we used to get we couldn't find them anymore (Kagiso youth, unemployed male)

*... there is no place where you can take your C.V because when you arrive at the gate they say ‘we don't have work’ and you find that everywhere so we all ended up here unemployed. I tried for years looking for a job because I moved here [**Alexandra**] in 2017 and ever since my arrival I had that hope that I will find a job because I heard from others who said, ‘we also stayed for a long time without finding employment but eventually did’ (Alex youth, unemployed female)*

*I had high hopes that this [**2020**] is my year of finding employment but Covid-19 struck, and I lost that hope, Covid-19 does not want to end, and we do not know how next year [**2021**] will treat us. Therefore, right now I do not know if I should leave or not with the money Ramaphosa's has given us [**referring to the Special Covid-19 Social Relief Grants**] If I do leave, I ask myself ‘will I still have the hope to come back if Covid-19 is still around?’ because I know if I do come back, I am still going to stay like this – unemployed (Alex youth, unemployed female)*

It is clear based on the narratives above that COVID-19 has made things more difficult for young people about their prospects of finding employment in the future, including piece jobs which were scarcely available before. The question then becomes how public employment programmes, such as CWP, may be developed and redesigned to create opportunities for the unemployed youth in rural, and urban areas.

It is important to acknowledge that not all youth seek to be employed but some had small businesses which were also negatively affected by COVID-19, especially during level 5 of the South African National lockdown.

We could not even do small businesses on the streets and we can't even have money the way we used to get money. Jobs were not opened too much because some people do not work, we only get work from other people, so we are struggling a lot... I am a make-up artist so I get hired to go and do people's makeovers so because of this Covid-19 I could not do anything because there were no more weddings. I could not do my makeovers anymore because people were not going out anymore, so it was hard for me to do so many things to get business again; to get the money I was getting out there it was too hard for me to get that business.

I lost all the revenue and savings made before COVID-19. I lost all the stocks I bought before lockdown as things got rotten during lockdown. Now I do not have money to buy a new stock (Kagiso youth, business owner).

What is clear from the above extracts is that Covid-19 disrupted the income streams of young township business owners who suddenly had to adapt to the lack of movement during the national lockdown. The money they would normally accumulate as profit that was not only used to grow their business but as means to provide for their families disappeared. It was difficult for them to cope as they had no jobs outside of their businesses to lessen the financial difficulties.

There was a lifeline which came in the form of the R350 unemployment relief grants where those fortunate to be approved used the relief grant money to revive their businesses. For example, Hugo from Kagiso ran a food business pre-Covid-19 selling Mogodu (tripe) but his business dwindled when Covid-19 hit:

I was affected when they announced that the country is going to close, that resulted in not having income for two months totally! So at least after two months when they released the Covid-19 relief funds as soon as I got paid it worked for me as I used the money to fill up my stock. Like I said before Covid-19 I was not affected but when the lockdown came into effect it was a challenge.

It is important to mention that Hugo decided to use R350-00 relief grant to buy a new stock of what he was not selling before Covid-19. He started a new street vending business selling vegetables, snacks, and sweets. The motivation behind starting this business was to provide for

his family and second was taking advantage of the fall of another small business owner who used to sell vegetables on the same street as him. Hugo was able to increase his customer base as the other business owner was completely out of business following the level 5 lockdown.

Youth like Hugo demonstrates the ability to be resilient even in difficult times by managing to think of new ways to reinvent his small business. Other young entrepreneurs spoke about how they relied on social media such as WhatsApp, twitter, and Instagram to advertise their services such as selling of food which also included private deliveries to customers and mobile car washes at their customers' households. The youth in the CWP cited some of these social media examples as creative strategies, which are currently missing within the current CWP model as the model is more preoccupied with the participants signing time sheets and lacking creativity to deal with changing times and embracing the use of technology to attract many young people within its fold. The CWP participants were not working during lockdown, which frustrated some of the participants⁵, especially the youth who felt some of their activities (dancing, singing, and acting) could have been done via online services such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams if the programme was flexible to embrace technology and be youth orientated.

6.5. The Special R350 Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant for the unemployed

The CWP participants did not qualify to receive the special R350 COVID-19⁶. In the section, I discuss the role the grant played in the lives of unemployed youth, especially in the context of how much money CWP participants received monthly. Most of the unemployed youth interviewed in Kagiso and Alexandra townships confirmed that they applied for the Special Relief Distress (SRD) grant, citing lack of basic needs such as food as the primary reason of why they applied for the grant:

For helping towards basic stuffs because lockdown came with too much hunger, things spiked, and prices went up. It helps there and there; it helps a lot for people who are unemployed such as my boyfriend. He can buy chicken pieces and maize meal and that helps in our house, I think

⁵ Despite getting their monthly stipends which for them, it was not about money but just wanted to do what they enjoy the most, which is artwork.

⁶ As the criteria was that any person receiving any grant or money from government is excluded from receiving this amount of money. The CWP participants were automatically excluded because they already get their monthly stipend.

the government must not stop this R350 grant it has to be something for a long time for unemployed people (Alex Unemployed SRD Grant Receiver, female).

I did not have clothes, toiletries, and food so that is what I used it for (Kagiso Unemployed SRD Receiver, Male)

Obviously because I do not work the only thing that stresses me out are toiletries (Kagiso Unemployed SRD Receiver, Male)

Media reports have shown long **ques** at the South African Post Offices across the country of unemployed people waiting to receive their SRD grants. Although official figures are not yet available, many grant recipients are reportedly young men. This is likely because many unemployed young women were ineligible for the grant as they receive child support grants - which also increased from R440 to R500 per parent, irrespective of how many children one has.

It is important to explore gender dynamics of this grant that many recipients are young men willing to queue for days and days until they receive their R350, while they are not happy to work in the CWP, citing that the money (R780) is not enough, which is higher than the SRD grant (R350). Are young men applying in big numbers to receive SRD grant because it is a free money unlike the CWP money which they need to work for? Or are young men applying in big numbers for SRD grant because it was highly publicized as compared to CWP which is not publicly spoken about or known by many young men? Some male SRD recipients asserted that they were not aware of the CWP and were keen to join the programme because the money paid was bit higher as compared to the SRD. They also wanted to join CWP because the payment was guaranteed over long period of time while the SRD grant may stop at any time post COVID-19. Fears and anxieties were shared by many SRD recipients about the possibility of it ending soon.

They must just make this thing (SRD) permanently (Alex youth SRD Receiver, male).

I am worried now that what is going to happen when the grant stops. I do not think they must stop this thing (Alex youth SRD Receiver, male)

Some civil organisations in support of the views above are calling for this grant to be made permanent (the C19 People's Coalition Cash Transfers Working Group, Black Sash, and the Institute for Economic Justice, 2021). All these preliminary findings call for some reflections by policy makers and researchers about the implementation of public employment programmes

and relief projects in response to COVID-19 in dealing with youth inclusion in the face of rising unemployment, poverty, and violence. It is also important to also explore how young men are using the R350 grant received as anecdotal reports assert that many uses it to buy alcohol rather than basic needs such as food. Further interviews are needed in this regard and how these relief funds may co-exist with other existing public employment programmes such as the CWP and EPWP than to be in opposition or competition with one another.

6.6. CWP, youth inclusion and violence

There was an agreement in both communities that there are alarmingly high rates of violence ranging from gender-based violence (GBV), burglaries, hijackings, and armed robberies. It was asserted that many of these violent acts are largely committed by young men particularly after drinking:

I do not want to lie we have a serious problem of violence here in Kagiso. People steal and kill other every day. It is mainly men that fight and fight when drunk (Kagiso Non-CWP participant)

Alex people know here is tough when comes to crime. You know you always hear about Alex and all stories is violence and violence. We also have a problem of people drinking. You see lockdown helped because people were not drinking during lockdown. It was fine. There were incidents of violence but wait until lockdown is over and you will see so much violence (Alex non-CWP participant).

The link between alcohol and violence was mentioned in many interviews. Some participants were favor of government to continue banning alcohol or find better ways of regulating it post COVID-19. Other interviewees asserted that ‘18 age requirements’ rule at local taverns must be enforced to avoid a problem of young people drinking alcohol heavily.

Gender-based violence was also mentioned as a common form of violence in the two townships but key informants narrated that many women are afraid to openly talk about it or report their cases to the police. In Alex, a new project within CWP has been started to deal with the problem of GBV.

As CWP, we offer all kinds of services including home-based. We now feel, we must deal with pandemic of gender-based violence in our community (Alex CWP Coordinator)

We need to encourage when we do our home-based care encourage women to report cases to the police and make sure that the police help victims rather than to withdraw cases (Alex CWP Manager)

Other studies in Orange Farm, and Ivory Park found similar initiatives in which CWP participants initiated various violence prevention initiatives, including anti gender-based violence (Langa and Masuku). It is important that these CWP initiatives include young people, especially young men who have been identified as the perpetrators of various forms of violence in the two communities. Organizing events that involve men is in line with emerging literature that identifies the importance of including both men and women in anti-domestic violence campaigns. It is a way of moving beyond the idea that only men are perpetrators of domestic violence, without acknowledging the possibility that they can also be victims (Ratele, 2013; Sathiparsad, 2008). These campaigns also give men the opportunity to reflect about violent practices associated with hegemonic masculinity, which often oppress and subjugate women. Young women also need to be provided some empowering workshops within CWP spaces that they should not normalize GBV within their private spaces.

Yes, we can talk to our young men during our meetings as CWP and tell them to stop beating or abusing their partners. We must talk to young women and encourage them to speak against abuse in their relationships. I think CWP can help us to achieve this if we use our meetings to also talk about these things.

6.7. Mental well-being of the youth and violence

The other theme that emerged during field work was mental health challenges that young people face daily and their link to violence.

You see people always say young people this and this. You know it is not easy my man. Young people also have challenges which are emotional. Where do you as a young person if you are too stress? People just judge us young people to say we drink and smoke, but people do not bother to check with you or why you are doing things you are doing (Alex non-CWP participant)

Being unemployed is not easy. You get so stressed that they only thing you think of is to drink and drink. Yes, drinking is not a solution but helps to deal with this pain, emotional pain that

you do not have a job. I used to be so stressed before I joined the CWP. I did not have money. I had nothing. Now with CWP I have some money at least to buy things although the money is too small, but it helps you know (Alex CWP participant)

At least now I have a job but when I was not working, this thing was affecting me emotionally. I was thinking a lot and even thinking of going to go and commit crime. This thing of not working can affect you. Now I feel better that I am working and able to support myself. It is not excuse but I can understand guys who are unemployed have so much anger. I can understand that because I used to be very angry when I was not working. I was just angry and emotional. I used to fight and fight with people. Everything just made me angry until I got a job (Alex CWP participant).

Across the participants (CWP and non-CWP) conceded that unemployment can affect one's emotional and mental well-being, resulting in major mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression. It was evident during field work that interviewees conceded that being employed through CWP helped immensely in the improvement of their mental health. Some participants alluded that prior joining the CWP used to drink excessively and behave violently but changed after joining the CWP.

Yes, the money is not very high, but I just appreciate the little I get that my dignity as a person has been restored that I able to buy basic things for myself than to beg and beg (Kagiso CWP participant)

I feel like I am changed person since I joined this programme of CWP. You know you wake knowing you need to go and do something. That frees your mind unlike where you sit with nothing to do. I now feel better my brother that at least I am working (Alex CWP participant).

It is evident that being employed was a turning point for some of the young people interviewed in this study. There was a sense of feeling that their dignity has been resorted. I found them to be reflective about the self, which in turn contributed to them being less angry and violent. In this way, participation in the CWP decreased their risk of mental health challenges and promoted their well-being emotionally and mentally.

7. Recommendations and policy implications----we also need to think of the preliminary findings could be used for media article.....

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