

# **YOUTH VOICES**

**A report on what the youth  
of South Africa are saying.**

25 May-12 June 2020

**Youth Pride and  
Youth Resilience**



Youth Month 2020 is very different to those celebrated in the past. We have recognised a weariness in young people as lockdown has taken different forms and changed levels. Practically, as Harambee, we have seen a **50% decline** in our online engagements over the past 4 weeks (mid- May 2020 – beginning June 2020). The tone of engagements echo **feelings of unease, discontent** and even **latent frustration**. Our sense is that young people are itching to **carry on with their lives** but there remain **many unknowns** and **fears**. Harambee, like the young people we serve, also lacks comprehensive answers but remains committed to sharing accurate information as best we can.

## Youth Pride and Youth Resilience

As we entered Youth Month, given the **tone of the insights** we were picking up on, we decided to **change angle** and ask our young people to **identify any positive outcomes from this time**. We asked them to share what they were **proud** of. Their answers, illustrated through this report, demonstrate **resilience, innovation** and **perseverance** as they continue to navigate an uncertain future.

**The answers South Africa needs really do lie with our youth.**



*I don't understand what is even happening*  
-FEMALE

*All of our ministers are still on lockdown, getting fully paid at the same time while younger people risk their lives, why don't they join the risk too cos its them who set the regulations and rules which we must apply*  
-MALE

*It feels like people have forgotten about the poor and we are suffering*  
-FEMALE

*During these hard times it has revealed where we actually stand with the Government*  
-FEMALE

*All of this..niyazama...hard work*  
-MALE

*I am loosing my mind as I type here [in response to a post on staying home]*  
-MALE

Our aim in asking this question to our network was to shift focus away from heavy content which can trigger emotional responses, to asking young people to identify something they themselves have achieved during this time. Here's what they said:

TELL US



WHAT IS THE ONE  
THING YOU ARE  
REALLY PROUD OF  
DURING LOCKDOWN?



## COOKING AND BAKING

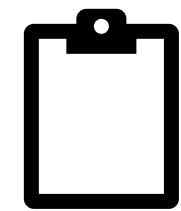
- "Learning how to cook because I was struggling when coming to the stove and chopping of vegetables, but now I have a skill. Thank you lock down"
- "Lock down made me feel like a chef, I never knew I had such skill in cooking and baking. I even wish I could go to culinary school so that I can have a certificate that can take me places"
- "Spending time in the kitchen and learning different recipes"



## LEARNING A NEW SKILL

- "I started writing a story named Destiny and I'm proud of myself, yes its not perfect but entertaining people wasn't something I ever thought I'd be capable of"
- "I just started a vegetable garden and they are growing so well"
- "Staying at home was an unusual time but I competed all four FUNZI online courses and received certificates of completion for these. I have learnt a lot and what is left is to now apply the theory in a real life situation"
- "I have done so many Microsoft courses to gain knowledge"
- "FUNZI free courses as I am now a step closer to them and being certified RPA developer"
- "I have learnt how to do welding and now I'm helping my brother in his business"





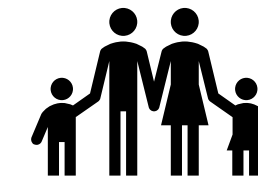
## REFINING BUSINESSES

- *"Pushing my business. I am busy with another poultry project in process"*
- *"I am helping my brother grow his business"*
- *"I have learnt how to manage my money and only buy what is needed and I am working on a business plan for the future to start my own business and take care of those who love me"*
- *"Coming up with new products for my business"*



## HELPING OTHERS / SERVING THE COMMUNITY

- *"I have been able to help a lot of people. I spent my time helping people to register for the SASSA relief grant with my phone and help those who were not aware of the free app to register"*
- *"I convinced a friend to help me feed the needy in this lock down and we succeeded"*
- *"We asked for donations and bought electricity for 50 vulnerable families"*
- *"This was my wake up call to invest in food security in my community as the government has failed us as there is so much corruption with food parcels from the councillors and MPs. I saw many families going to bed without food. I am trying to prepare us better for the future"*



## SELF IMPROVEMENT AND FAMILY

- *"Lock down helped me to find peace within myself and I'm proud"*
- *"I'm gymming a lot"*
- *"Enough time to plan what I can do with my life"*
- *"Bonding with my family"*
- *"Changing my perspective"*
- *Time alone with my thoughts"*
- *"Spending quality time with my family and teaching my daughter who is starting Grade R"*
- *"Lockdown made me realise there lots of things I need to do in terms of my future, it helped me to have time to think"*
- *"I am now open minded to new ideas and change. This is a phase and it will eventually pass"*
- *"Making new friends"*
- *"I am unlocking my mind by reading African literature and political books"*
- *"Spending time with my brother"*
- *"I've realised the power of free thinking"*

We currently have 6 Youth Voices Listening Groups on WhatsApp. They are groups of young people from across South Africa: **Gauteng, Western Cape, Buffalo City, KwaZulu Natal, Women and Employed Youth.**

We have recently assigned a staff member to regularly engage more with these groups, ask questions, keep conversations going, and try to foster a sense of a smaller, safe online community where young people can voice concerns, feel heard and support each other. Over the past 3 weeks the below themes have emerged which confirm what we are seeing online:

### **Across regions, young people are saying they have lost jobs due to lock down**

- *“Ay its very hard bro, we are starving and I lost my job also”*
- *“I was working then lost my job due to the lock down”*
- *“Its really difficult at the moment to find jobs but hopefully as the lock downs start adjusting more will pop up”*

### **A reliance on SASSA grants remains a stable source of income for many families**

- *“My source of income right now is the child support grant”*
- *“Its bad for me, I am surviving on my child grant with no source of income”*

### **Some have attempted to start small businesses with varying degrees of success**

- *“I’m thinking of ways to make my business work” (selling hand bags / beauty products)”*
- *“I’m trying to get my business selling winter clothes off the ground”*


### **Future planning is difficult given so many unknowns (job hunting, life planning, circumstances)**

- *“I used to look for a job physically cos this online applications they never call back”*
- *“I’ve left the place I was renting because now I cant even afford to pay my funeral policy”*
- *“Life for me is really hard with my learnership ending this month”*




#HARAMBEEHANGOUTS

## HARAMBEE BRUNCH HANGOUTS



“Have a vision of where you want to go. Practically do some research and look at what you are able to do right now. Just because you have never worked doesn't mean you don't have experience!”



Nokuthula Chonco

Harambee Brunch Hangouts is a series of Facebook Live interviews with industry thought leaders who reflect on the challenges and triumphs they have experienced along their career paths and share tips that youth can use to build successful careers.

The series continues to be a great platform for us to respond to insights and keep youth informed, engaged and inspired.

*“Hi I can hear Hulisani speaking about feeding our minds, I'd love to ask if there's any book that she can recommend that maybe changed her life or perception. Thank you”*

*“Wow...Nokutula is so inspiring”*

*“Great platform this is. Wouldn't have been where I'm today if it wasn't the confidence instilled by you guys”*

*“Your personal branding stems from the essence of your authenticity. Bring who you are to what you do”*

*“How old and When did she buy her own first house not for her company?”*

*“You guys are helpful and Useful shem ❤️😊 May You keep up the good work 🙌”*



Things are tough, times are uncertain but these Youth Legends characterise youth pride and youth resilience.



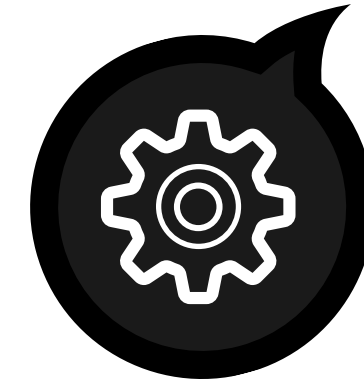
Mushoni Magadidzha is a 24 year old from Ekangala in Tshwane who is an experienced business woman. After completing the SASOL I AM PRENEUR and Tshepo 1Million programmes, Mushoni identified a farming need in her community and is currently studying towards becoming a livestock technician. While studying she is able to help local farmers with information on how to increase their livestock, keep them healthy and grow their businesses. Mushoni also sells cattle bones as a side hustle. “What keeps me going is my family and working hard to help them and being able to give back to my community. I am determined to succeed”.



Meet Dineo Mafa a true Youth Legend! She is 30 years old and comes from Krugersdorp. During lock down, Dineo noticed how people online and in her community were struggling to apply for the SASSA relief grant. Having completed it for herself and knowing how easy it could be, Dineo offered to help people submit their applications. Most of the people she helped to submit were paid! Dineo says “I spent a lot of time in lock down helping people apply for the SASSA grant. I am so very happy that I am able to do something to really help people”

South African youth are now **three months into the lockdown** and some have had to put **income-generating activities on hold**. A 50% decline in online engagement and reflections shared through social media comments might be an indication that the youth have started to feel the impact of the lockdown on their need to continue to generate income.

**The next Youth Voices report will focus on the re-opening of the world as youth re-join the workforce.**



### WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU AT THE MOMENT?

*The most important thing for me now is finding a job hence the irregularities of stipend payments at seta...we haven't been paid our stipends and the struggle is real."*

*"It seems like you forgot financial. How can we rest comfortable while we ain't financially stable?"*

*"Finding a job it's hard but mostly this corona pandemic its huge everything is at standstill."*

*"Getting a job is very important for me right now i really desperately need it lost a lot during this lockdown"*

*"Return to campus. And finding a job."*