



YOUTH VOICES



Women's Month and Youth Strain

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

July – August 2020



August is Women's Month in South Africa, which provides a time to focus on the achievements, needs and concerns that women across the nation face. Leading up to and during this month, the Youth Voices team asked a core set of questions to our online community to gauge sentiment on young women's realities. This report describes some of these findings.

During this process however we have encountered a much larger and concerning reality – that of all young people are taking strain in various contexts they find themselves in: being female, lockdown, work seeking and unemployment. While we will provide some answers on our gender questions for Women's Month, this report also contains a description of how we cannot ignore the strain our youth are under and we need to re-evaluate how we engage with them.

Without a doubt, the Youth Voices team can say that young South Africans are taking strain when it comes to income generation, work seeking, and the low levels of available and accessible meaningful work opportunities for them.

Retrenchments, termination of learnerships, unsuccessful applications, money to search for work and noticeable increased competition for employment opportunities are many of the concerns expressed by youth in our networks. Young people are tired and are increasingly expressing feelings of demotivation, frustration, anger and hopelessness.

In our previous report, we shared on youth pride and youth resilience, tangible shifts in sentiment cannot be under expressed. Repeatedly our online engagements are met with angry responses that *"talking is getting us no where"* and *"why are you asking us these questions – we need jobs not conversations!"*

It is important to describe the strain young people really are under while also re-evaluating the role of Youth Voices as an interface between our youth networks and Harambees work.

Engaging specifically with the young women in our network we asked a series of online questions on:

1. Women's employment status
2. Women's side hustles or working in the informal economy
3. If women experienced increases in house and childcare work during recent months of lockdown?
4. What women thought barriers to entry for them into the labour market were?

CORE FEEDBACK


- Online, men have described feeling excluded while women are afraid of making their voices heard in conversations that have women at the centre. This has provided an interesting gender dynamic to our engagements.
- Online engagement is extremely low. We attribute this to youth strain covered in the next section
- Housework and childcare have been overwhelming for young women in lockdown
- Reductions in salaries have affected both women and men
- Unemployment is extremely anxiety provoking
- Load shedding provides additional stress
- Data remains expensive and a barrier to engagement for young women
- Side businesses include selling beauty products, Tupperware or spaza shops.
- Women believe that barriers they face into the labour market include self belief, gendered job descriptions and social stereotypes.





Mosa Mphaho
Yes, I take care of two households
1w Like Reply  1

I am currently working from home and we experience load shedding almost every week.

This load shedding affects network connection in my area. Sometimes I am unable to join meetings, send & receive emails.

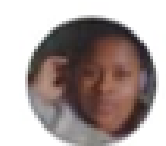


Nkele Jeaniffer Marima
This lockdown is tough fr me .i must do house chores n take care of my took kids and school them as well
1w Like Reply   2



Rosemary Vuyo Nombila
Some job descriptions (like lifting objects) require men while we CAN do it
2w Like Reply


Hi ladies it is really bad now in this corona because as a mother of two kids i'm at home sitting doing now as for now i'm really out of opinions of what i can do to get money
19:07




Nompumelelo Mooi
Perfume business
5d Like Reply



Zuzeka Bridget Kwa Makopa
Selling Tupperware
2d Like Reply



Ntombekhaya Vaphi
self-esteem
2w Like Reply  1



Fidelite Igiraneza Habakwitonda
Many people think that women are not strong like men
2w Like Reply  1

Young South Africans are taking strain when it comes to income generation, work seeking, and the low levels of available and accessible meaningful work opportunities for them. Retrenchments, termination of learnerships, unsuccessful applications, money to search for work and noticeable increased competition for employment opportunities are many of the concerns expressed by youth in our networks. Young people are tired and are increasingly expressing feelings of demotivation, frustration, anger and hopelessness. We recognise that this is only going to increase, while also acknowledging the limitations we as an organisation operate under. We are needing help on how to shape the way we engage with our Youth.

FRUSTRATION

Young people have started calling us out and checking in to find out if we have context. Some feel that we continue to conduct surveys about their reality and come up with solutions without having experienced their challenges.



"I wish you could come to the ground e.g. location informal place you would see and understand all that you want to understand."

"What's the purpose of this if you don't mind me asking? Is this a survey or you are asking out of curiosity?"

"Why is it that we shelter a mentality that seeks for solutions to come from people who are not in the situations with us?? Sorry for the reference but that's like a chef expecting the taste to come from ingredients that he didn't add into the pot, that's crazy."

"And also understanding the problem is half the answer but a problem cannot be understood merely through conversation nor observation alone."

CONVERSATIONS FOR ACTION

Our Youth Voices WhatsApp community would like for us to create spaces that will afford them the opportunity to engage with policymakers and influential people that can help curb youth unemployment.

"I noticed the post above about a person here still job hunting? Does the admin have any access to the Govt. with regard to what policies are in place to petition companies to reemploy their members as the covid-19 cools off. Y'know what. The thing I'd especially want to know and need answers about is this. How will we be reassured that there will be jobs available in SA as people need income to get back on track. People, friends family I know have been flippun retrenched these days! I want to know many jobs will actually be available as the covid issue subsides because we need to survive outchea."

If only we had big companies or government reading sitting down with us to hear our stories to help.

GENDER LENS: SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF SA YOUTH

Young people have a different view on how research with a gender lens should be approached, especially if it is conducted through direct engagement with them. They believe that the need for gender-specific insights should be subtle and that we should refrain from causing a rift between men and women.



"But why must it be that women are measured only when they are being weighed against men??? why can't we measure women on their own merits instead of creating a riff or some form of competition where women are only measurable when compared against men?"

"True what i am merely pointing out is that we don't have a Men's month where the same question is asked to men and this then creates an ideology that platforms are always created to address the inequalities as well as challenges that women face but that same platform is never afforded to men for they are always seen or perceived by the society as being beneficiaries of these inequalities when that is not the case that is actually not true at all we all suffer from a capitalistic system which creates these inequalities but whenever we address them we portray men as being the creators of this system when they too are merely just benefiting by circumstance not by choice and the circumstances which lead to this are various could be by opportunity or chances and many other reasons/factors which i cannot mention at the moment cause it would take us the whole year just putting these contributing factors on the table... but back to my point, both men and women are victims of inequalities on various level but why do we provide a platform that only addresses one side of the problem?"

"This is going to be a difficult task for you to achieve it you keep segregating people according to their circumstances and conditions, you need to stop doing that so as to allow yourself to deal with the problem holistically, i mean A disabled female can still be classified as a Youth, as well as a Woman so why have the sub divisions? "

"Shaking my head as I read this, I'm a guy and though we may differ in gender I have insight into your struggles. I've known enough close women in my life that struggle to string together income as well.. Remember Thaaaaaat queue I waited SIX hours in to just get R350 social grant? It had many mothers and I knew one from my church and another spoke to me saying the money won't even last them a month. She said it can be finished in a day. These are real stories we aren't just reading off a novel this is real pain. If only we had big companies or government reading sitting down with us to hear our stories to help.."

Like all other Harambee teams, Youth Voices is re-evaluating its position and role in the organisation. Originally set up as a listening tool, we are recognising the need to change not only *HOW* we interact with our youth but also how we interact and align with the organisation.

SUGGESTIONS

Youth Voices is one of the only 1 – 1 engagement spaces we have at this moment.

We need to move away from “*tell us how you are doing*” type questions. This frustrates young people. We know the issues. We want to ACT. Young people want and need us to ACT.

We want to align with other teams to provide *support* for young people in our networks and create **impact**.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Merge our WhatsApp groups
- Appoint Youth Champions (*can we employ people here / ad hoc payments / data incentive for the person?*)
- Share more captured youth stories to motivate (*don't look for new ones*)
- Zoom conversations with a real person (face to name situation)
- Create a publication schedule e.g.: Brunch Hangouts transcripts / youth centered solutions / Youth Legends
- Share Daily Standup interviews from other youth

ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- Align with network management team
- Align with Work Seeker Support
- Share their engagement and support content



#HARAMBEEHANGOUTS

JOIN US THIS FRIDAY FOR HARAMBEE BRUNCH HANGOUTS!

f LIVE INTERVIEW

31 JULY | 12:30PM | @HARAMBEE.YOUTHEMPLYMENT

We'll be hanging with Sivu Prusent and Noku Gumbi, Harambee Work-seeker Support Managers who will be telling you more about our NEW Work-seeker support hangouts, Pusha your work-seeking game, on the last Friday of every month. [Comment here to ask them your questions](#)

No data? [Read a text transcript of the interview after on our Facebook page.](#)

BE MINDY - BE SAFE - BE KIND
SUPPORT SOUTH AFRICA

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 broadcasts at 12h30pm on Fridays and continues to be a great platform for us to respond to insights and keep youth informed, engaged and inspired.

Over the past six weeks, Brunch Hangouts has weaved in critical topics for work-seekers and hustlers who form part of the Harambee Facebook community:

- **Smart ways of keeping your small business running during the lockdown**
(Media Personality & Businessman, Maps Maponyane)
- **Making a success of an unconventional career path**
(Rapper Khuli Chana, Comedian Alfred Adriaan & former SA Rugby Sevens Player Cecil Afrika)
- **Disability Inclusion in the Workplace**
(Lesa Bradshaw & Nombuso Cele)
- **Holistic Wellness and ways in which young women can better position themselves in the workplace**
(Media Personality, Melanie Bala)

With the aim of finding new ways of facilitating Harambee Work Seeker Support Workshops, Brunch Hangouts recently launched the '**Pusha your work seeking game**'. The hangouts are hosted by Sivu Prusent and are broadcasted on the last Friday of every month.

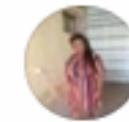
Youth are under a lot of strain and are expressing their frustration and desperation to be connected to job opportunities.

'Pusha your work seeking game' will empower the youth in their work seeking journey addressing some of their specific queries and general network engagement queries, providing the benefit of our network services without office or face-to-face engagement limitations.



Monica Diniso · 0:00 Hello I'm a Harambee member I moved from east London to Tembisa now I don't know where to find Harambee around here,I have completed my Harambee bridging program

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 4w



Nceshie Mpondonkulu · 0:00 I need a job

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 5w



Nhloso Ngqulunga · 1:00:13 Since i applied you didnt respond back

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 5w

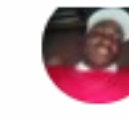


Fortune Malesela · 0:00 Am from Polokwane seshego since i applied on Harambee Youth Employment i have never recieved any call from them does Harambee recognize people from Polokwane seshego or only deals with people from the CBD



Kwezi Venus Kolweni · 0:00 I'm one of those for the motorbike license I've been waiting since the last day in march when we got our learners

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 1w



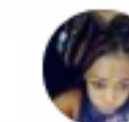
Hlogih Ramoshaba · 0:00 Hi pls help me since I hv registered since 2016-feb ka attender but still no work

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 5w



Andile Drex Gilifaty Gold · 28:33 Where can i find harambee offices at Eastern cape?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 1w



Siyanda MaWhite · 39:29 Still looking foward for your respond I posted my CV to you guys 🙏

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 4w



SisBongeka Scordy Bambiso · 41:37 Ever since Harambee postponed the interview and never call me again... Thabong shopping centre 'Jumbo clothing shop' ❤️

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